

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CASES

[Return to TOC](#)

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INFORMATION

Interaction with numerous other agencies is vital to the success of the Child Support Services (CSS) program. The North Carolina Division of Social Services (DSS) and the Division of Medical Assistance (DMA), which supervise the Public Assistance (PA) programs, and the county departments of social services, which administer the PA programs, are essential because of the information that they exchange with CSS and their participation in the child support process. The interdependence between Work First Family Assistance (WFFA) and CSS is especially significant, since families in need of child support often require additional financial assistance.

This chapter contains the following topics:

1. [Work First Family Assistance \(WFFA\) cases;](#)
2. [Medicaid \(MAO\) cases;](#)
3. [NC Foster Care \(IV-E\) and State Foster Home Fund \(SFHF\) cases;](#)
4. [The referral and creation of PA cases;](#)
5. [The North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology \(NC FAST\) interface with ACTS;](#)
6. [NC FAST triggers.](#)

WORK FIRST FAMILY ASSISTANCE (WFFA) CASES

GENERAL INFORMATION

This topic contains information on the following subjects:

1. [An overview of Work First Family Assistance;](#)
2. [Work First Benefits \(WFB\);](#)
3. [The assignment of rights by Work First recipients;](#)
4. [Cooperation requirements for Work First recipients;](#)
5. [Noncooperation by Work First recipient with Good Cause;](#)
6. [Noncooperation by Work First recipients without Good Cause;](#)
7. [Potential results of noncooperation.](#)

WFFA (WORK FIRST FAMILY ASSISTANCE) OVERVIEW

"Work First" is the program through which North Carolina administers the federally-funded Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. Work First payments are made to custodial parents (CPs) on behalf of dependent children in "Child-Only" Work First cases on or about the first day of each month. In this type of case, the CP of the child(ren) is not included in the assistance payment, but the CP is the payee for the Work First payment.

All other Work First cases that include at least one (1) adult are subject to Work First Benefits (WFB). Payments are made for these cases in the month following the benefit month, if certain requirements are met. For more information on these requirements, see [Work First Benefits](#).

TANF recipients assign their rights to support to the State when they receive Public Assistance (PA). The CSS program is entitled to establish retroactive support owed to the State subsequent to June 30, 1975 (NCGS 110-135).

NOTE: The acronym "AFDC" (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) is sometimes used by the CSS program; it was the PA program under which grants were paid prior to 1995. Where "AFDC" appears, understand that the reference is now to Work First (WFFA) or TANF.

REFERRAL REQUIREMENTS - WFFA

Cases with Work First recipients whose eligibility for financial assistance is based on the absence of one or both parents from the home must be referred to a CSS agency.

RANGE OF CSS SERVICES - WFFA

Work First recipients are eligible for all CSS services at no cost. CSS agencies must also seek a provision for health insurance coverage as part of the child support order that is established for a Work First recipient. Work First recipients are required to cooperate with the CSS agency in the establishment, enforcement, and modification of a medical support obligation. This service must be explained to the Work First recipient and thoroughly documented in the case record.

WFFA CUSTODIAL PARENTS/RECIPIENTS

The Work First recipient is always the CP of the child(ren). The CP is usually someone related to the child(ren), unless a judge has ordered the placement of the child(ren) in the home of a CP who is not related. Work First recipients can be minors who have applied for WFFA/TANF for themselves and/or the dependent child(ren).

FAMILY CAP - WFFA

If a child is born to a woman who has been receiving Work First payments for at least ten (10) months, the Work First payment amount DOES NOT increase. This limitation on the amount of the Work First payment is known as the "family cap". A child who is born at least ten (10) months after the family began receiving Work First payments is included in the WFFA assistance unit. The child's mother (or CP, if the mother is a minor) receives a Medicaid card and FNS/Food Stamp benefits for the child, but the Work First payments do not increase.

CAP CHILDREN - WFFA

Children born at least ten (10) months after the family began receiving Work First payments are known as "cap children". Although the WFFA/TANF payment is not increased when the cap child(ren) is

added to the family, these children are PA recipients, and any child support payments for them are distributed to the State. CSS case coding reflects this status.

BENEFIT DIVERSION - WFFA

Instead of being approved for Work First, a family can be approved for a one-time benefit known as "Benefit Diversion", which consists of several months' worth of Work First payments, FNS/Food Stamps, and Medicaid benefits being paid at one time, as opposed to over a period of months. (The Medicaid benefit, however, is provided over a period of months.) This alternative allows the family to meet an immediate need for financial assistance while preserving independence from welfare.

When families select this option, they are provided with information about the availability of CSS services. If the family then requests CSS services, the case is established as a Non-Public Assistance (NPA) case. The Benefit Diversion agreement serves as verification of application; no application fee is charged. A Benefit Diversion case does not create a debt of PPPA (Past Paid Public Assistance) to be recouped by CSS.

If the Benefit Diversion application is withdrawn or denied, CSS is notified via an Income Maintenance Transmittal Form (DSS-8194). The caseworker generates a Letter To CP - TANF Application Denied/Withdrawn (DSS-4470) to notify the CP that an application fee must be received by the CSS agency within thirty (30) days in order to continue CSS services.

Data on all Work First cases and Benefit Diversion cases is maintained in the North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST). The Economic Independence Section of the Division of Social Services supervises county departments of social services in administering WFFA/TANF and Benefit Diversion.

WORK FIRST BENEFITS (WFB)

WFB Policy -

NCGS 108A-27.2 (1c) and 108A-27.9 (c) (1c) require all eligible Work First recipients to complete all aspects of their Mutual Responsibility Agreement (MRA) Core Requirements and MRA Plan of Action each month before receiving a Work First cash assistance payment, unless Good Cause exists. These Work First cases must include at least one (1) adult; "Child-Only" cases are not subject to Work First Benefits (WFB).

All Work First applications with an adult in the case are subject to Work First Benefits (WFB). These cases include:

- Cases with a single parent with children;
- Cases with a work-eligible person;
- Cases in which a parent is caring for a disabled family member;

- Cases with incapacitated parents;
- Cases that include two (2) parents.

The recipients in WFB cases do not receive a Work First payment until after the end of the benefit month. Work First payments are issued the month after the recipient completes all requirements on the MRA for the benefit month.

Recipients in these cases must comply with the MRA and MRA Plan of Action in order to receive a Work First check. The MRA contains the timely notice that if recipients do not comply with all the provisions of the MRA, they will not receive a Work First payment. Recipients must submit documentation of compliance or good cause by the fifth (5th) work day of the following month; however, documentation can be accepted after the fifth (5th) work day in the month if good cause exists for why the information is late.

Work First caseworkers must issue a Work First benefit check within three (3) work days after receiving adequate documentation of compliance. If documentation is not received by the fifteenth (15th) work day of the month, Work First must terminate the Work First check, end the recipient's Medicaid eligibility (unless the recipient is pregnant), and transfer the case to Medicaid (MAF) for the child(ren) in the case.

When a Work First benefit case has been transferred to Medicaid due to the recipient's failure to comply with MRA requirements, a reapplication is required if the family wants to receive Work First Benefits again. If the former Work First recipient reapplies for Work First within the first ten (10) calendar days of the first month of receipt of Medicaid, and provides documentation of compliance with the MRA, the Work First worker can use an administrative reapplication process.

WFB Process When CP Fails To Meet MRA Requirements -

The Work First Benefits (WFB) CP receives a benefit check the month after the benefit month when that CP provided proof of compliance with the MRA. When the recipient does not provide all the necessary documentation by the fifth (5th) work day of the following month, the Work First caseworker makes an effort to contact the recipient to determine if good cause exists or if help is needed to obtain the documentation of compliance with the MRA.

If the required documentation has not been received by the fifteenth (15th) of the month following the report month and good cause has not been established, the Work First caseworker must transfer the case to Medicaid for the child(ren) in the case. The recipient is deleted from the case unless she is pregnant. If she is pregnant, she is evaluated for Medicaid for Pregnant Women (MPW).

When the recipient fails to provide proof of compliance, the recipient does not receive the WFB check for the prior month. When a case transfers from WFB to Medicaid due to the failure of the recipient to comply with MRA requirements, it then becomes "Medicaid only" for

child support purposes. Then, the former Work First recipient is eligible to receive child support payments.

When a WFB case has been transferred to Medicaid due to the recipient's failure to comply with MRA requirements, the CSS caseworker must take specific actions for the case. The necessary actions differ, depending on whether or not the noncustodial parent (NCP) made a payment for the month(s) leading up to the termination of WFB and the transfer of the case to Medicaid.

ASSIGNMENT OF RIGHTS

As a condition of eligibility for Work First, the applicant/recipient must assign to the state the "rights to support" from any other person on his/her own behalf, or on behalf of any other family member for whom the applicant/recipient is applying for or receiving assistance. NCGS 110-137 accomplishes an automatic assignment of rights of child support for recipients of Work First for or on behalf of a dependent child up to the amount of WFFA/TANF paid. Assignment of rights is explained fully to the applicant/recipient at the time of the interview with the Income Maintenance caseworker. In addition, a copy of the service brochure with an explanation of services and fees, rights and responsibilities, and distribution policies is also provided at that time.

WFFA RECIPIENT/CUSTODIAL PARENT COOPERATION REQUIREMENTS

As a condition of eligibility for WFFA/TANF, the applicant/recipient is required to cooperate in good faith to establish paternity of a child or to establish, modify, or enforce a support order. Providing information, documents, or completed forms or participating in judicial or administrative proceedings could be required for the following purposes:

1. Identifying and locating the noncustodial parent (NCP);
2. Establishing the paternity of a child born out of wedlock, including if necessary, the submittal of the custodial parent (CP) and child to paternity testing;
3. Determining the amount of and collecting support payments;
4. Appearing at the offices of the local IV-A or CSS agency in the county that is providing public assistance benefits, as necessary to provide information relevant to the case;
5. Appearing as a witness at court or other hearings or proceedings as necessary; and
6. When the applicant is the putative father, responding to a request to acknowledge of paternity. (However, the applicant/putative father is not required to admit paternity or otherwise relinquish the right to paternity testing or judicial determination of paternity.)
7. Reporting to WFFA any money that is received directly from the NCP.

If WFFA applicants do not provide information regarding the NCP's identity and/or location, the referral is forwarded to the CSS agency, indicating why the information was omitted.

The Work First program provides a copy of the "Notice Of Requirement To Cooperate And Right To Claim Good Cause For Refusal To Cooperate In Child Support Enforcement" to families at application and review of Work First assistance. This notice explains the meaning, benefits, and consequences of cooperation and noncooperation.

Unless a claim of Good Cause is granted, recipients must cooperate fully with CSS in all Public Assistance (PA) cases that they have with CSS. A noncooperation referral from CSS in one case can cause a recipient to be ineligible for assistance in other existing or future WFFA cases. If a CSS case is closed due to noncooperation and later the recipient applies for assistance for the same or other child, the prior noncooperation must be addressed before assistance can be granted.

Recipients who believe that cooperation would be detrimental to the child can make a claim of Good Cause to the Work First or CSS agency. Work First caseworkers evaluate Good Cause claims by examining the evidence provided by recipients and/or their own investigation.

The Work First agency determines whether or not Good Cause exists based on the best interest of the child, and within five (5) business days of the determination, notifies CSS of the decision.

Evidence of any of the following situations could indicate Good Cause:

1. The applicant/recipient's cooperation in establishing paternity and support is reasonably anticipated to result in:
 - Physical or emotional harm to the child for whom support is being sought; or
 - Physical or emotional harm to the CP that could result in the inability to adequately care for the child.
2. Proceeding to establish paternity or secure support would be detrimental to the child for one of the following reasons:
 - The child for whom support is sought was conceived as a result of incest or rape;
 - Legal proceedings for the adoption of the child are pending before a court of competent jurisdiction; or
 - The applicant/recipient is currently being assisted by a public or licensed private social agency to resolve the issue of whether to keep the child or relinquish him/her for adoption, and the discussions have not gone on for more than three (3) months.

WFFA RECIPIENT/CUSTODIAL PARENT NONCOOPERATION - GOOD CAUSE

When a recipient makes a Good Cause claim to Work First after a referral has been made to CSS:

- The NC FAST worker enters the information into NC FAST, which notifies CSS that a Good Cause claim is pending.
- ACTS prevents certain enforcement actions from occurring.
- ACTS creates a reminder thirty (30) days later for the CSS caseworker to review the case.

If the Work First agency determines that the recipient has Good Cause for refusing to cooperate:

- The NC FAST worker enters the information into NC FAST, which notifies CSS that the Good Cause claim is approved.
- ACTS notifies the responsible CSS caseworker's supervisor that the CSS case can be closed.
- The CSS supervisor documents that the case closure is due to a finding of Good Cause by the WFFA, Medicaid, or Foster Care program and closes the case.

If the Work First agency determines that Good Cause for refusing to cooperate does not exist:

- The NC FAST worker enters the information into NC FAST, which notifies CSS that the Good Cause claim is denied.
- ACTS notifies the responsible CSS caseworker to proceed.
- The CSS caseworker proceeds to work the case.

If a recipient who initially cooperated with the Work First agency later makes a Good Cause claim to CSS after work has begun on the case:

- The CSS caseworker documents the Good Cause claim, including the reason for the claim.
- The NC FAST worker is notified automatically to investigate the claim.
- The NC FAST worker enters the information into NC FAST, which notifies CSS that a Good Cause claim is pending.

If the CSS caseworker perceives that pursuing work on the case would be dangerous for the recipient and/or child(ren), even though the recipient has not claimed Good Cause:

- The CSS caseworker documents the Good Cause claim, including the reason for the claim.
- The NC FAST worker responds in the same manner as with a claim that was made by the recipient.

WFFA RECIPIENT/CUSTODIAL PARENT NONCOOPERATION - NO GOOD CAUSE

If Work First applicants/recipients do not cooperate with CSS, and Good Cause for failure to cooperate is not established, a referral for noncooperation might be appropriate.

Public Assistance (PA) recipients can encounter barriers to cooperation involving issues such as transportation, child care, a medical condition, or employment. Before making a noncooperation referral, CSS must take steps to ensure that recipients have been given adequate information and opportunity to cooperate. CSS caseworkers should also confer with the IV-A worker or social worker regarding a recipient's failure to cooperate.

The following examples offer options to prevent the need for noncooperation referrals:

EXAMPLE 1:

If the recipient fails to respond to one mail or telephone communication attempt:

- CSS should check the participant address history to determine if an updated address became available after written communication was sent. NC FAST notifies ACTS of any changes to the participant's address, so the recipient's most recent address should be available.
- If a new address is found, CSS should send the information to the new address.
- CSS should attempt to contact the recipient by telephone if a number is available.

If recipients cannot be reached by telephone or mail and have made no attempt to contact the caseworker, they meet the criteria for noncooperation.

NOTE: Failure to respond to one communication by CSS does not meet the criteria for referring a recipient for noncooperation. However, stating an intention not to cooperate does meet the criteria for referring a recipient for noncooperation.

EXAMPLE 2:

If transportation, child care, or the health of a member of the recipient's family is a problem:

- CSS should ask for assistance from the IV-A or social worker in making arrangements for the recipient to keep the scheduled appointment.

EXAMPLE 3:

If the recipient's own health is an obstacle to keeping the scheduled appointment:

- CSS can interview the recipient by telephone and mail the necessary forms to the recipient for his/her signature.
- CSS can ask for assistance from the IV-A worker or the social worker in getting the forms returned to CSS.

EXAMPLE 4:

If the recipient's employment is the obstacle preventing him/her from keeping the scheduled appointment:

- CSS should make all reasonable efforts to avoid disrupting the recipient's employment.

EXAMPLE 5:

If a recipient's failure to return the necessary forms in a timely manner could lead to a finding of noncooperation:

- CSS should seek assistance from the IV-A or social worker before making a referral for noncooperation.
- CSS should determine if the document or information can be obtained through other means.

EXAMPLE 6:

If a Work First recipient hires a private attorney to handle child support matters:

- CSS should advise the recipient to inform the CSS agency so that the actions of the CSS attorney and the private attorney can be coordinated.

NOTE: A Work First recipient's hiring of a private attorney to handle child support matters is not an act of noncooperation.

A decision to refer a recipient for noncooperation can be made as a result of:

- Multiple unsuccessful attempts to facilitate recipient cooperation;
or
- A recipient's statement of the intention not to cooperate.

POTENTIAL RESULTS OF NONCOOPERATION

REFERRAL TO WORK FIRST FOR NONCOOPERATION

Referral for noncooperation can only be indicated in open TANF or MAO cases. CSS caseworkers must indicate custodial parent (CP)/ recipient noncooperation in ACTS, document the date of the decision to make the noncooperation referral, and enter notes that specify what is needed from the CP.

CSS notifies the NC FAST worker of the noncooperation. Upon receiving the information, the NC FAST worker notifies the recipient of the referral from CSS and potential sanction. NC FAST does not return a final disposition for noncooperation.

When the recipient corrects the noncompliance, CSS immediately notifies NC FAST through ACTS. Work First CANNOT accept notice by telephone or other means of communication.

SANCTIONS IMPOSED DUE TO FAILURE TO COOPERATE

Cooperation with CSS is a part of the Work First recipient's Mutual Responsibility Agreement (MRA) Core Requirements. A Work First recipient who fails to cooperate with CSS without Good Cause:

1. Is ineligible for Medicaid (unless the recipient is pregnant or receives Medicaid as an SSI recipient); and
2. Causes the entire family (all individuals included in the Work First case) to be ineligible for a Work First payment for one (1) month or until compliance, whichever is later.

The MRA for Work First Benefits recipients serves as timely notice of termination of Work First payments when the recipient does not cooperate with CSS. When CSS sends notice of a Work First recipient's noncooperation, the recipient must miss at least one Work First payment.

Sometimes, a Work First recipient cooperates with CSS after CSS sends notice of noncooperation to NC FAST. The Work First recipient will never receive a Work First payment for the month of noncooperation with CSS, even if the recipient cooperates within the timely notice period or within the same month. If the recipient cooperates with CSS during the timely notice period, the recipient (as well as the children in the case) continues to be eligible for Medicaid, and the family is eligible for the Work First payment the month following the month of cooperation.

Because of the significant impact to the family, CSS must take all appropriate steps to facilitate recipient cooperation efforts, either prior to or following sanction.

When a Public Assistance (PA) recipient contacts CSS to arrange an appointment or to provide information, CSS caseworkers review ACTS to determine whether noncooperation is at issue.

If noncooperation is at issue, CSS should:

- Review the notes to determine what is needed from the recipient.
- Take prompt action to facilitate the recipient's cooperation.
- When cooperation has been completed, immediately notify Work First.

NOTE: Scheduling an appointment or agreeing to provide information does not constitute cooperation. Keeping the appointment and/or providing information are required for cooperation to occur.

If the CSS Customer Service Center (CSC) receives a call from a recipient attempting to avoid sanction for noncooperation:

- The CSC representative reviews ACTS. If noncooperation has been indicated, the representative reviews the notes to determine what is needed from the recipient and takes information from the recipient or advises the him/her that contact with local CSS is needed, as appropriate.
- The CSC representative documents the call and notifies the responsible caseworker that the matter is urgent.

- The responsible worker must promptly contact the recipient, take any other appropriate actions to facilitate compliance, and notify NC FAST of the cooperation.

If a WFFA recipient fails to cooperate, the WFFA case is terminated. The remaining Medicaid case is coded Aid-Program/Category "MAF" and Payment Type "9" in NC FAST. The CSS case remains coded "MAO" and might be eligible for closure.

After the NC FAST case is closed, the recipient might want to receive WFFA at a later time. If that recipient later applies for WFFA for any child participant in a CSS case for which there is an outstanding noncooperation issue with CSS, the recipient must cooperate with CSS concerning that case before the WFFA application can be approved.

NC FAST caseworkers can send a note to the CSS caseworker when sanctions are imposed or lifted.

WORK FIRST PAY-AFTER-PERFORMANCE

Pay-after-performance for "standard" Work First counties means that a two-parent family is receiving Work First payments. Unlike single parent families, two-parent families do not receive a Work First check until they have completed (performed) the required hours of work and/or work-related activities.

Some Work First counties could elect to establish their own eligibility criteria and benefit levels. These counties are known as "electing" Work First counties. Electing counties could define pay-after-performance as a sanction and/or a two-parent family. (CSS caseworkers must contact the local Work First agency for this determination.)

NOTE: A referral for a two-parent Work First cases is appropriate if one parent in the case is a stepparent to a child in the case, and CSS services are required to establish paternity and support for the child.

COMPELLING TESTIMONY FROM A NONCOOPERATIVE CLIENT

Policy for Compelling Testimony

NCGS 110-131 permits actions to compel testimony from noncooperative custodial parents (CPs). The use of this procedure is limited to situations where all other avenues have been explored and in which the caseworker has reason to believe that the CP/recipient has information that can assist in locating and securing support from the noncustodial parent (NCP).

The use of this procedure is at the discretion of and reviewed by the local supervisor.

NOTE: Issuance of a subpoena for the CP/recipient to appear as a witness in a paternity, support establishment, or enforcement hearing can be an alternative to a motion to compel the CP's testimony.

NCGS 110-131(a) provides that on failure or refusal to assist in providing the required information, authority is granted to cite the noncooperative parent to appear in District Court and be compelled to disclose such information under oath.

A CP's refusals to appear before a district court judge constitutes grounds for contempt of court. A CP can be declared ineligible for Public Assistance (PA) by county DSS for as long as he/she fails to cooperate, or the CP can be fined one hundred (\$100.00) dollars or imprisoned not more than six (6) months, or both.

Compelling Testimony from Minor Mothers -

Contempt actions under NCGS 110-131 must never be used in CSS cases involving an unemancipated minor mother, even when she is the payee for the Work First grant. Whenever applicable, the only procedure to be used in minor-mother CSS cases is a referral to the local Work First agency for noncooperation.

Minor CPs CAN be subpoenaed to testify or appear as a witness in paternity, support establishment, or show cause hearings, since competency to testify is a decision of the court.

MEDICAID (MAO) CASES

GENERAL INFORMATION

This topic contains information on the following subjects:

3. [An overview of Medicaid;](#)
4. [Medicaid referral requirements;](#)
5. [Medicaid \(MAO\) custodial parent \(CP\) cooperation;](#)
6. [Conducting Intake Interview for Medicaid Cases;](#)
7. [Special consideration regarding CP cooperation for certain Medicaid categories;](#)
8. [Medicaid \(MAO\) CP noncooperation;](#)

MEDICAID OVERVIEW

The Division of Medical Assistance (DMA) supervises county departments of social services in the provision of medical assistance called "Medicaid" to adults and children who are below the appropriate federal poverty income limit for a person of their age.

NC FAST (North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology) maintains data on all Medicaid cases. After receiving notification from CSS that health insurance has been obtained for the dependent child(ren), DMA is able to bill the health insurance provider for the cost of the care paid for by the Medicaid program.

MEDICAID REFERRAL REQUIREMENTS

Per Federal regulations, county DSS must refer all Medicaid cases to

CSS if they meet the following requirements:

1. A custodial parent (CP) applies for Medicaid for either:
 - A. The CP AND the child; or
 - B. The CP ONLY, if the child already receives Medicaid; or
 - C. The child ONLY, if the CP requests Child Support services and agrees to cooperate with CSS.
2. The child meets the following conditions:
 - A. The child is under the age of eighteen (18) OR is age eighteen to twenty (18-20) and is attending primary or secondary school and a support obligation exists; AND
 - B. At least one (1) of the child's parents is absent from the home (and is not deceased); AND
 - C. The child does not have health insurance other than Medicaid or medical support payments. If a child has insurance or medical support payments and the CP requests child support services, a referral should be made.

EXCEPTION:

If the CP of the child(ren) in a [Child-Only Medicaid case](#) is receiving [Medicaid FPW](#) (Family Planning Waiver), county DSS is required to refer the [Child-Only Medicaid](#) case to CSS for services. CPs who receive [Medicaid FPW](#) are required to cooperate with the local CSS agency.

Medicaid case referrals are not appropriate in the following situations:

- A finding or pending action for Good Cause exists;
- The application for medical assistance for a child is for retroactive assistance only;
- The child is living independently of a parent/caretaker;
- The child is an SSI recipient, unless the CP requests referral;
- The child receives automatic newborn medical assistance, unless the mother requests referral and agrees to cooperate with CSS;
- The child or CP receives Expanded Foster Care Program Medicaid (EFCP);
- The CP is pregnant. Referral can be made after the postpartum period ends;
- The CP is receiving transitional Medicaid.

NOTE: If reason exists to believe that an inappropriate referral has been made after the CSS case has been opened, contact the referring agency for verification of the validity of the referral. At this time, NC FAST does not have an indicator on the referral reflecting a CP's desire to receive IV-D services, even though the case fits the criteria for an inappropriate referral otherwise. Workers can contact the referring agency

for verification of the validity of the referral or attempt to contact the CP to determine if the CP desires services. If the CP does want IV-D services, proceed with the case. If the CP indicates that services are not desired or does not respond to CSS after repeated attempts, the case can be closed with the "CINR" reason code. (A 60-day notice is not required.)

Local CSS agencies must seek health insurance coverage for the children in properly referred Medicaid cases. The CP has the option to request that CSS provide the full range of services for the case.

If no order for medical support exists for the case, CSS is required to determine if coverage that reflects the best interest of the child(ren) is available at a reasonable cost, is accessible to the family, and is within either party's ability to pay. For example, if insurance is available from the noncustodial parent's (NCP's) employer or other group insurance and does not exceed five percent (5%) of the NCP's gross income, CSS can pursue the establishment of an order for the NCP to provide medical support.

When CSS establishes an order that includes a provision for the NCP to provide health insurance for the minor child(ren), CSS should provide proof of medical insurance to the CP.

If an order for medical support is already in place, CSS is required to enforce the medical support provision in the order.

MEDICAID (MAO) CUSTODIAL PARENT COOPERATION

In order for Medicaid eligibility to be established, the custodial parent (CP) is required to cooperate with the local CSS agency to:

1. Identify and locate the parent of any child for whom assistance is requested;
2. Establish the paternity of any child born out of wedlock for whom assistance is requested;
3. Obtain medical support coverage information from the noncustodial parent (NCP) for any child for whom assistance is requested; and
4. Assign any medical support payments due the parent remaining in the home and/or any child for whom assistance is requested to the Division of Medical Assistance (DMA).

CONDUCTING THE INTAKE INTERVIEW FOR MEDICAID CASES

The requirements are the same for the initial interview of a Medicaid recipient as it is for other recipients of Public Assistance. CSS caseworkers must establish a case record and determine what (if any) additional information is necessary to begin.

The CSS Initial Interview Checklist (DSS-7072), the CSS Application (DSS-4451), and the Custodian Address Memorandum must be completed and

filed in the case record, along with any other documentation that the custodial parent (CP) provides.

In addition to these requirements, a Medicaid recipient is allowed to choose whether to accept full CSS services, which includes financial support, or just cooperate with securing an order for medical support only. This decision must be recorded in ACTS.

CSS workers can begin providing the next appropriate service for a Medicaid referral, such as location or contacting the NCP, if paternity is at issue. However, workers must not refer the case for court action without documenting the CP's decision regarding the type of order that will be sought (full range of services or just an order for medical support) and the completion of the Custodian Address Memorandum.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION CONCERNING OTHER MEDICAID CATEGORIES

Other Medicaid aid categories exist that must be given special consideration regarding custodial parent (CP) noncooperation:

- [Family Planning Waiver \(FPW\)](#);
- [Medicaid for Infants and Children \(MIC\)](#);
- [Medicaid for Pregnant Women \(MPW\)](#);
- [Supplemental Security Income/Medical Assistance to the Disabled \(SSI/MAD\)](#);
- [Child-Only Medicaid cases](#).

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: CUSTODIAL PARENTS RECEIVING MEDICAID FAMILY PLANNING WAIVER (FPW) -

The caretaker of child(ren) who are recipients in a Child-Only Medicaid case can receive assistance through the Medicaid Family Planning Waiver (FPW), also known as the "Be Smart" program.

Child-Only Medicaid cases must be referred to CSS by the county DSS if the caretaker/ custodial parent (CP) of the children is receiving Medicaid FPW. If the child of a caretaker who is receiving Medicaid FPW is later approved for Medicaid, county DSS must refer the case with the child to CSS. The CP must cooperate with CSS to receive services. If CPs fail to cooperate, CSS must notify the county DSS's Medicaid Unit.

To qualify for Medicaid FPW, the CP must not be eligible for coverage in another Medicaid aid program/category. The assistance unit consists of only one person- the CP. Services that are available under Medicaid FPW include the following:

1. An annual family planning exam;
2. Counseling and contraceptive supply visits to support the effort to continue a pregnancy spacing plan;

3. Most methods of birth control;
4. Screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections;
5. Screening for HIV; and
6. Sterilization for men and women over twenty-one (21) years of age.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: CUSTODIAL PARENTS WITH NEWBORNS RECEIVING MEDICAID FOR INFANTS AND CHILDREN (MIC) -

Custodial parents (CPs) whose children are eligible for "autonewborn" benefits under Medicaid for Infants and Children (MIC) are not required to cooperate with CSS concerning the newborn child(ren) during the 60-day post-partum period. The case can be referred to CSS at the end of this period. If CPs request CSS services, their cases can be referred prior to this time period.

Children on automatic newborn MIC can receive MIC benefits for a year. If the CP is not receiving Medicaid and does not cooperate with CSS, no referral for noncooperation should be made to the county DSS's Medicaid Unit, since cooperation with CSS is not required. No sanctions can be imposed by county DSS.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: CUSTODIAL PARENTS RECEIVING MEDICAID FOR PREGNANT WOMEN (MPW) -

Recipients of Medicaid for Pregnant Women (MPW) are not required to cooperate with CSS for either the unborn child or children receiving aid under other categories of medical assistance. Federal regulations require referral of these cases to CSS at the end of the custodial parent's (CP's) 60-day post partum period. At that time the CP is no longer eligible for MPW and is required to cooperate with CSS in establishing and enforcing medical support. The case can be referred prior to this time if the CP requests the referral.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: CUSTODIAL PARENTS WITH CHILDREN RECEIVING SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)/ MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE DISABLED (MAD) -

Children who receive SSI automatically receive Medical Assistance to the Disabled (MAD). These cases are handled by the local office of the Social Security Administration (SSA) and are not referred to CSS when child support services are needed. In these situations, the CP or caretaker of a child who needs child support due to the absence of a parent is advised to contact the local CSS agency to apply for services.

These cases are to be treated in the same manner as any other MAO case. No application fee is charged. If the child in an existing Non-MAO case becomes an SSI/MAD recipient, the CP can elect to receive only medical support services from CSS. A continuation of services notice is NOT sent to the CP in this situation.

CHILD-ONLY MEDICAID CASES -

When the CP is declared ineligible for Medicaid, the Medicaid case (regardless of the aid category) is considered a Child-Only Medicaid case. County DSS is not required to refer Child-Only Medicaid cases when the CP (caretaker of the child) does not receive any other Medicaid or Work First benefits. These cases are referred to CSS only if the CP requests CSS services or is receiving [Medicaid FPW](#) (Family Planning Waiver).

Child-Only Medicaid cases can be closed when the caretaker of the child fails to cooperate with CSS.

NOTE: Transitional Medicaid cases are not considered Child-Only Medicaid cases and should not be closed when the CP does not cooperate.

Case Closure for Child-Only Medicaid Cases -

Once it has been determined that the case is an inappropriate referral, supervisors can close the case immediately using the case closure reason code "CINR" (Inappropriate referral).

Two exceptions exist to the preceding policy regarding the closure of Child-Only Medicaid cases:

- Twelve Month Transitional Medicaid (TMA) cases, which are not considered Child-Only Medicaid cases, cannot be closed due to the CP's failure to cooperate with CSS, even though the CP is NOT required to cooperate.
- Child-Only Medicaid cases for which the caretaker is receiving [Medicaid Family Planning Waiver \(FPW\)](#) cannot be closed due to the CP's failure to cooperate, because the CP is required to cooperate with CSS.

MEDICAID (MAO) CUSTODIAL PARENT NONCOOPERATION

Failure to cooperate with the CSS agency can result in the custodial parent (CP) being declared ineligible for Medicaid. If a CP in an MAO case who is receiving the Medicaid benefit refuses to cooperate with CSS, local CSS must notify the county DSS's Medicaid unit of the CP's noncooperation.

The procedures for processing a noncooperation claim in a Medicaid case are the same as those applied in a Work First case.

When the CP is declared ineligible for Medicaid, the Medicaid case (regardless of the aid category) is considered a [Child-Only Medicaid case](#). [Child-Only Medicaid cases](#) can be closed when the CP fails to cooperate with CSS; however, some exceptions exist.

FOSTER CARE (IV-E & SFHF) CASES

GENERAL INFORMATION

This topic contains information on the following subjects:

1. [An overview of Foster Care \(IV-E and SFHF\)](#);
2. [Confidentiality of Foster Care participant information](#);
3. [Basic information about Foster Care](#);
4. [Types of Foster Care cases](#).

FOSTER CARE OVERVIEW

"Foster Care" provides for the care of children who cannot be cared for adequately by their family. The Children's Services Section of the North Carolina Division of Social Services (DSS) oversees the county departments of social services that administer Foster Care programs.

NC has several types of Foster Care arrangements and funding sources. CSS caseworkers must have a working knowledge of Foster Care programs to ensure that Foster Care cases are set up correctly in ACTS.

CONFIDENTIALITY - FOSTER CARE INFORMATION

Under the provisions of Chapter 7B of the NC General Statutes, certain information regarding children in the care of Foster Care programs (including addresses) is confidential and can be released only as provided for by Chapter 7B. The child's address should not be included in a child support order and inquiries regarding the address should be referred to the county child welfare agency.

See the "Dear County Director" letter of November 10, 2014, for more information. To see this letter, access this URL: ["https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/documents/files/dss/dcdl/dssdirectorsoffice/DIR-10-2014.pdf"](https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/documents/files/dss/dcdl/dssdirectorsoffice/DIR-10-2014.pdf).

Confidentiality under Chapter 7B includes children in IV-E and State Foster Home Fund (SFHF) Foster Care cases and children placed in DSS custody.

When a CSS case is opened for a child in DSS care, CSS must contact DSS and:

- Confirm which program is providing services for the child;
- Explain the statutory requirement to include addresses in court orders and measures that CSS will take to protect this information in DSS cases;
- Ensure that no current mailing or residential address record exists for the child in ACTS;
- Indicate in ACTS that domestic violence is a concern and document the information in the case history.
- Do not complete a Custodian Address Memorandum document.

Prior to a court hearing or entry of a support order, CSS caseworkers must advise the CSS agency attorney of the case status and legal restrictions on the release of address information that can be requested under NCGS 110-136.3 (a). They also notify all appropriate parties of any testimony or evidence that might be required.

If DSS elects to have child support paid to the caretaker of a child in DSS custody or the caretaker receives TANF for the child, caseworkers use the procedures addressing the inclusion of addresses in court orders.

BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT FOSTER CARE

North Carolina pays for Foster Care through two programs:

- NORTH CAROLINA FOSTER CARE (IV-E) - Federal funds, as well as State and county funds, pay for this program. These funds are used to make "board" payments for children in Foster Care. "Board" payments are payments for the cost of the child's care. In ACTS, the case type is "IVE" (which refers to the program's legal authorization under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act), and the custodial parent (CP) is always "NC FOSTER CARE".
- STATE FOSTER HOME FUND (SFHF) - The State of North Carolina and the counties fund this program. These funds pay the cost of care for children in Foster Care placement who are not eligible for other types of Foster Care funds. The State funds fifty percent (50%) of the board payment and the child's county DSS (Department of Social Services) funds the other fifty percent (50%). In ACTS, the case type is "SFHF", and the CP is the county DSS that is paying part of the board payment.

Before creating a case for a Foster Care child in ACTS, CSS caseworkers must decide what type of case to create and who is the custodial parent (CP) in the case, based on the type of Foster Care care arrangement.

CSS caseworkers must verify:

- The funding source - IV-E (Federal) or SFHF (State) funds;
- The type of placement for the child - whether the child is in a licensed Foster Care home or in an unlicensed arrangement.

Foster Care can use the Foster Care Transmittal Form (DSS-4744) to provide this and other needed information to CSS caseworkers.

The child can benefit from a board payment and Medicaid, or only Medicaid. CSS caseworkers cannot review the information in NC FAST to verify whether the child benefits from a board payment to cover the cost of care or the child only receives Medicaid. Workers also cannot verify what the child receives from a review of the benefit history information in NC FAST.

Most of the time when a child is placed in a licensed Foster Care arrangement, a monthly board payment from either IV-E or SFHF funds pays the cost of the child's care. A child could be in a licensed

Foster Care arrangement and only receive Medicaid if they have another source of income, such as SSI or Social Security dependent's benefits.

CSS caseworkers must decide the correct IV-D case type ("IVE", "SFHF", "MAO", or "NPA"), based on the funding source of the board payments for the child in Foster Care. The funding source of the board payment determines the case type in ACTS and to whom support payments are disbursed and reimbursed.

CSS should contact the child's Foster Care social worker to verify whether a board payment is being made and what is the funding source for any board payment.

Sometimes a child is in the legal custody of the county but lives with a court-approved guardian caretaker or a relative. These types of living arrangements are usually unlicensed arrangements that do not qualify for any board payment from IV-E or SFHF funds.

SIS (SERVICES INFORMATION SYSTEM) NUMBER

When a child receives child welfare services, the child is assigned an individual SIS (Services Information System) number. If the automated referral from NC FAST does not include this number, CSS caseworkers must contact the child's Foster Care social worker to obtain this number and enter it in ACTS for the child. Once this number is entered, ACTS can receive and update changes to Foster Care information in the system.

TYPES OF FOSTER CARE CASES

NORTH CAROLINA FOSTER CARE (IVE) CASES

Federal funds, as well as State and county funds, pay for this program. In ACTS, the case type is "IVE" (which refers to the program's legal authorization under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act), and the custodial parent (CP - coded "CLI") is always "NC FOSTER CARE". In NC FAST, the Foster Care Type is "Title IV-E".

Before creating the "IVE" case in ACTS, CSS workers contact the child's Foster Care social worker to obtain the child's SIS (Services Information System) number and to determine the funding source and the total amount of board payments that already have been expended for the child.

NOTE: All children in NC Foster Care are eligible automatically to receive Medicaid.

STATE FOSTER HOME FUND (SFHF) CASES

The State of North Carolina and the counties fund this program. These funds pay the cost of care for children in Foster Care placement who are not eligible for other types of Foster Care funds. The State funds fifty percent (50%) of the board payment and the child's county DSS (Department of Social Services) funds the other fifty percent (50%). In ACTS, the case type is "SFHF", and the custodial parent (CP) is the county DSS that is paying part of the board payment.

ACTS. ACTS displays the CP as the county name followed by "DSS" (EX: "WARREN DSS"). In NC FAST, the Foster Care Type is "Title IV-B".

CSS caseworkers create an "SFHF" case in ACTS only when State Foster Home Funds are being expended for the cost of care (board payment). Children in SFHF Foster Care are evaluated for Medicaid (and most are found eligible), but they do not necessarily benefit from funds for board. The source of funds for the cost of care cannot be determined by viewing the child's case in NC FAST; CSS contacts the Foster Care social worker for this information.

DSS CUSTODY CASES

When a child is in the legal custody of the county but lives with a court-approved caretaker or relative in an unlicensed arrangement, the case is not eligible for IV-E or SFHF funds. The case is not eligible for these board payment funds because the child does not live in a licensed Foster Care home. The county pays one hundred percent (100%) of the Foster Care board, and the child is eligible for Medicaid. CSS should always contact the Foster Care social worker to verify that the county pays the board.

These cases are often referred to as "DSS custody" cases. The county's Department of Social Services receives the child support payments for the case. In NC FAST, the Foster Care Type might or might not be "IV-B".

DSS Legal Custody - Court-Approved Caretaker or Relative Placement with No Board Payment -

The child is in the legal custody of the county and lives with a court-approved caretaker or a caretaker who is a relative. CSS caseworkers contact the Foster Care social worker to verify that there is no board payment prior to initiating the case in ACTS. In ACTS, the caretaker of the child is the CP, and case type is "MAO". The caretaker receives the child support payments, because no board payment is being paid for the child's care.

DSS Legal Custody - Relative Placement with TANF Payment -

The child is in the legal custody of the county but lives with a relative who is the caretaker. In ACTS, the caretaker of the child is the CP, and the case type is "AFDC" because the relative caretaker receives TANF for the child. Child support payments are disbursed and reimbursed as with any other TANF case.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE (PA) CASE REFERRALS/CREATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

This topic contains information on the following subjects:

1. [Automatic case referrals \(a Public Assistance case is created or referred upon approval of the PA application\);](#)
2. [Immediate case referrals \(a PA case is created or referred prior to approval of the PA application\);](#)

3. [CSS case status changes for WFFA, MAO, and NPA cases;](#)
4. [Manually creating a PA case in ACTS;](#)
5. [Accessing the "Holding Tank";](#)

AUTOMATIC REFERRALS (UPON APPROVAL OF THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE APPLICATION)

Public Assistance (PA) cases are referred at the time of the custodial parent (CP) interview in the Department of Social Services (DSS) office or, if they are entered by the DSS data entry unit, no later than five (5) days after the interview. When a parent is determined to be absent from the home, NC FAST (North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology) automatically refers the case to CSS through the NC FAST/ACTS interface to CSS when the application for Public Assistance is approved, unless Good Cause exists for not making a referral.

This provision applies in all WFFA/TANF ("AFDC"), Medicaid ("MAO"), North Carolina Foster Care ("IVE"), and Medicaid-eligible State Foster Home Fund ("SFHF") cases.

CASE REFERRALS AND UPDATES

When ACTS receives the PA case data through the N FAST/ACTS interface, it creates a CSS case, determines the proper processing status, unit, and responsible CSS caseworker for the referred case. ACTS documents these activities and notifies the caseworkers.

If NC FAST sends ACTS a referral but the responsible county has not been indicated, the system refers the case to the SPLS worker who handles cases with noncustodial parents (NCPs) whose last names begin with "U". The SPLS worker accesses NC FAST to determine which IV-A county made the referral and refers the case to the appropriate CSS agency.

ACTS also assigns a CSS case (IV-D) number to the case as well as an MPI # to each participant. If a participant in the case already exists in ACTS, that participant's current MPI # is used. (For example, if the ACTS Referral ID/EIS Case #, SSN, and name are the same, ACTS declares a match. If the ACTS Referral ID/EIS Case # matches but the SSN or name does not, ACTS warns the appropriate Intake caseworker to look at the available case data and decide whether or not a match exists.)

For Foster Care cases with both mother and father as the NCPs, two (2) separate cases are created for each child (one with each NCP). County DSS is designated as the CP in these cases, because the children are in the custody of DSS.

If more than one child is included in a IV-E or Medicaid-eligible SFHF case, ACTS notifies the responsible CSS caseworker of the error and stops the Case Initiation process.

Within forty-five (45) days of the NC FAST referral, a disposition is entered for the PA application (approval, denial, or withdrawal by the applicant). After the PA application is approved, the system notifies the responsible caseworker of the new case.

ACTS processes updates to cases that are received over the NC FAST/ACTS interface during nightly batch processing and notifies the responsible caseworkers of these updates on the following morning.

Upon receiving a PA case referral, the caseworker does the following:

- Determines what actions are needed to provide services for the case;
- Accesses the participant and case data screens in ACTS and reviews the available information;
- Provides the CP with a Child Support Services Application (DSS-4451) to complete;
- Instructs the CP to keep Pages 23-24 of the Application; this provides the CP with information describing the available services, the CP's rights and responsibilities, and the policies governing fees and distribution of support that is collected;
- Retains as completed Application in the CSS record for audit purposes;
- Requests from the CP (or other sources) any additional information that might be needed; and
- Updates the case record to include all of the necessary information that is received.

CSS caseworkers should schedule an interview with the CP as soon as possible after receiving a referral so that these tasks can be completed in a timely manner and services can begin for the case.

IMMEDIATE REFERRALS (PRIOR TO APPROVAL OF THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE APPLICATION)

Some county departments of social services refer Work First or Medicaid applicants to CSS immediately after taking the application. This is known as an "Immediate Referral". CSS caseworkers can access the "Holding Tank" to build this type of case. No application fee is charged for this type of case, pending the outcome of the Public Assistance (PA) application process.

Just as with PA cases that are received through [automated referral](#), the case must be reviewed to determine what information and actions are needed to deliver services to the case.

County departments of social services do not refer Foster Care children to CSS until the Foster Care application is approved. If the Foster Care child is eligible for Medicaid under any aid program and category, this referral is completed using the normal process described in the [Foster Care Cases](#) topic that appears earlier in this chapter.

If the child is not eligible for Medicaid, the social worker completes a Child Support Services Application (DSS-4451) for the child and each noncustodial parent (NCP) and routes it to the appropriate CSS agency. The caseworker creates an "NPA" case with the County Director of

Social Services as the custodial parent (CP); no fee is charged. A separate case is created for each NCP. (Unlike other Foster Care cases, these Foster Care cases follow the ordinary rules applicable to NPA cases; more than one child can be included in these cases.)

CSS CASE STATUS CHANGES FOR WORK FIRST, MEDICAL ASSISTANCE ONLY, AND NON-PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CASES

County DSS refers all approved applications for appropriate Work First, MAO, IVE, and SFHF cases to local CSS via the NC FAST/ACTS interface. A CSS case can be changed from WFFA/TANF to MAO or NPA, from MAO to WFFA/TANF or NPA, or from NPA to MAO or WFFA/TANF. (IV-E and SFHF cases cannot be changed to other CSS case types, except for those case types which designate a particular kind of arrearages that can accrue for the Foster Care case types.

What happens in each situation depends primarily on whether or not the affected case is under order.

WORK FIRST, MAO, AND NPA CASES - NOT YET UNDER ORDER

Work First ---> NPA

If a WFFA/TANF case not yet under order becomes a NPA case, the custodial parent (CP) is sent a Continuation Of IV-D Services (DSS-4453). The CSS agency continues to pursue the noncustodial parent (NCP) for child support and medical support, unless the CP instructs them to do otherwise.

Work First ---> MAO

If a WFFA/TANF case not yet under order becomes a MAO case, the CP is sent a Continuation Of IV-D Services (DSS-4453). The CSS agency continues to pursue the NCP for child support and medical support, unless the CP instructs them to do otherwise. (The CP has the option of requesting the CSS agency to pursue the NCP for health insurance only.)

MAO ---> NPA

If a MAO case not yet under order becomes a NPA case, the CP is sent a Continuation Of IV-D Services (DSS-4453). The CP must inform the CSS agency whether he/she wishes to continue having CSS services, but the CP DOES NOT have the option of having CSS continue ONLY medical support services. Instead, the CSS agency pursues the NCP for BOTH child support and medical support, unless the CP instructs CSS to discontinue all CSS services.

MAO ---> Work First

If an MAO case not yet under order becomes a WFFA/TANF case, the CSS agency pursues the NCP for child support and medical support.

NPA ---> MAO

If a NPA case not yet under order becomes a MAO case, the CSS agency continues to pursue the NCP for paternity (if applicable), child support, and medical support, unless the CP instructs them to do otherwise, in which case service is limited to the provision of medical support.

NPA ---> Work First

If a NPA case not yet under order becomes a WFFA/TANF case, the CSS agency continues to pursue the NCP for paternity (if applicable), child support, and medical support.

WORK FIRST, MAO, AND NPA CSS CASES - UNDER ORDER

Work First ---> NPA

If a Work First case under order becomes a NPA case, enforcement of the order continues. Payment distribution is altered so that the CP receives all current support payments. Payments for arrearages that accrued while the CP was on Work First are retained by the State until such time as NPA arrearages begin to accrue.

Work First ---> MAO

If a Work First case under order becomes an MAO case, enforcement of the order continues. Payment distribution is altered so that the CP receives all current support payments. Payments for arrearages that accrued while the CP was on Work First are retained by the State until such time as NPA arrearages begin to accrue. Clients in MAO cases have the option of having the CSS agency enforce only the health insurance component of the order.

MAO ---> NPA

If a MAO case under order becomes a NPA case, the CP is sent a Continuation Of IV-D Services (DSS-4453). The CP must inform the CSS agent whether he/she wishes to continue having CSS services, but the CP DOES NOT have the option of having CSS continue ONLY medical support services.. Instead, the CSS agency continues to enforce the order for child support and medical support, unless the CP instructs CSS to discontinue ALL CSS services.

MAO ---> Work First

If a MAO case under order becomes a WFFA/TANF case, the CSS agency pursues the NCP for child support and continues to enforce the order for medical support.

NPA ---> MAO

If a NPA case under order becomes a MAO case, the CSS agency continues to enforce the order for child support and medical support, unless the CP instructs otherwise, in which case service is limited to the provision of medical support. CPs in MAO cases have the option of having the CSS agency enforce only the health insurance component of the order.

NPA ---> Work First

If a NPA case under order becomes a WFFA/TANF case, the CSS agency continues to enforce the order for child support and medical support.

MANUALLY CREATING A PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CASE

The majority of Public Assistance (PA) cases are created in ACTS as a result of PA referrals that come through the NC FAST/ACTS interface; however, CSS caseworkers sometimes must manually create a PA case. This situation most often occurs when a child moves from one custodial parent (CP) to another or when the child's NC FAST case status changes (for example, from Work First to Medicaid or from Medicaid to Work First), and either ACTS functionality requires the manual creation of a PA case or an NC FAST trigger errors out, requiring manual creation of a case. In either of these situations, ACTS notifies the responsible caseworker.

Caseworkers might also need to manually create a PA case for other reasons.

EX: The NC FAST/ACTS interface refers a case to CSS that has ONLY ONE (1) NCP and a non-parent (such as a grandmother) is the CP. When this occurs, caseworkers must determine whether a valid reason exists for not opening a case for the other NCP. If no valid reason exists, caseworkers must create a PA case manually with the other parent as the NCP;

OR

A SFHF child is not eligible for Medicaid and has no case in NC FAST. Because no case referral from NC FAST exists, caseworkers must create a PA case manually.

ACCESSING THE "HOLDING TANK"

During the IV-A application process, a copy of the NC FAST participant's demographic and address data is saved to the "holding tank". The holding tank is where ACTS stores information about NC FAST participants who are applying for CSS services, but for whom IV-A approval is still pending. IV-E and SFHF Foster Care participants are not included in the holding tank.

The data in the holding tank is especially useful to caseworkers in counties that use the [immediate referral](#) process. caseworkers can search the holding tank in order to determine whether a participant is part of a pending referral from IV-A or whether he/she already exists as a participant in ACTS.

If necessary, caseworkers can create a new ACTS participant from the NC FAST participant data in the holding tank. When a caseworker selects a participant from the holding tank, much of the demographic and other participant data that was entered by the NC FAST worker during the application process is brought to the appropriate case and participant data screens in ACTS.

Caseworkers can build a new case by using only participants from the holding tank OR by using a combination of holding tank participants and existing ACTS participants. They can also create an participant in ACTS from a holding tank participant without having to "link" that person to a case at all.

NC FAST/ACTS INTERFACE

GENERAL INFORMATION

This topic contains information on the following subjects:

1. [Components of the NC FAST/ACTS interface;](#)
2. [The "Electronic Filing Cabinet";](#)
3. [Proper configuration of NC FAST data in ACTS;](#)
4. [Sharing NC FAST/CSS case data;](#)
5. [Exchanging information as notes between NC FAST and CSS workers;](#)

COMPONENTS OF THE NC FAST/ACTS INTERFACE

The NC FAST/ACTS Interface has several components that work together to share information between the two systems. These components are:

- North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST) - NC FAST stores information about Public Assistance (PA) applications, cases, and participants.
- Automated Collections and Tracking System (ACTS) - ACTS stores information for Child Support Services (CSS) cases and participants.
- Triggers - "Triggers" are sets of data that are exchanged between NC FAST and ACTS. A trigger is assigned a number based on the type of data that it contains.
- Electronic Filing Cabinet - The Electronic Filing Cabinet is used to store and exchange triggers between the NC FAST and ACTS systems.

THE ELECTRONIC FILING CABINET

Triggers are exchanged between NC FAST and ACTS through the "Electronic Filing Cabinet", which works in the following manner:

1. NC FAST loads its triggers for ACTS into the filing cabinet during nightly processing.
2. ACTS collects the trigger records that evening and processes them nightly batch processing. At the end of the nightly batch, ACTS loads its triggers for NC FAST into the filing cabinet.
3. The following night, NC FAST collects the triggers from ACTS that were loaded the previous night. Throughout the work day, ACTS scans the filing cabinet for referrals that have been

approved in NC FAST and processes those triggers without waiting for nightly processing.

PROPER CONFIGURATION OF NC FAST DATA IN ACTS

GENERAL INFORMATION

While the CSS program is responsible for ensuring that participant and case data is current in ACTS, county DSS is responsible for providing and updating certain data for all custodial parents (CPs) and children in Public Assistance (PA) cases.

NC FAST NAME CHANGES

If a CP in a PA case reports that his/her name has changed, CSS caseworkers must not update the participant data in ACTS at that time. Caseworkers must advise the CP to contact the local county DSS and provide them with the updated information. The change is transmitted to ACTS via the NC FAST interface.

CNDS ID (EIS INDIVIDUAL ID/EIS PARTICIPANT NUMBER)

Every CP and child in a WFFA/TANF, IV-E, MAO, or Medicaid-eligible SFHF case is assigned a CNDS (Common Name Data Search) ID. It was previously referred to as the "EIS (Eligibility Information System) Individual ID" or "EIS Participant Number".

ACTS REFERRAL ID (EIS CASE NUMBER)

CSS identifies each case by its CSS case (IV-D) number. In addition, every WFFA/TANF, IV-E, MAO, and Medicaid-eligible SFHF case also has an ACTS Referral ID (previously referred to as the "EIS case number") associated with it. NC FAST assigns this number, and it is linked to the MPI # of the CP in the PA case in NC FAST. It is recorded in ACTS when the case is referred over the NC FAST/ACTS interface.

The amount of WFFA/TANF that has been paid to the CP is recorded under the ACTS Referral ID (EIS case number) and is used to determine the shares of arrearage payments that should be provided to the State and to the CP.

SHARING NC FAST/CSS CASE DATA

County DSS is responsible for providing data for all custodial parents (CPs) and children in Public Assistance (PA) cases to CSS. The CSS program is required to receive this information through new case referrals and updates on case participants and to use it appropriately in managing case activities.

The NC FAST/ACTS interface automatically updates certain CP/child demographic data in ACTS.

ACTS DOES NOT update CP/child data in NC FAST automatically. ACTS does generate a monthly report for Foster Care workers that contains demographic and collection data for all noncustodial parents (NCPs) of children who are in the custody of county DSS. The only automated way to inform NC FASTR workers of CP/child demographic changes for Work First and Medicaid cases is through the use of notes.

EXCHANGING INFORMATION (NOTES) BETWEEN CSS AND NC FAST WORKERS

The exchange of current information between CSS and NC FAST workers is vital to the proper processing of CSS cases. In addition to the standard data sent over in the automated referral, the NC FAST worker includes any additional information pertinent to the case in a "note".

EX: When NC FAST refers a WFFA/TANF case with a custodial parent (CP) who has insurance for his/her dependent child, notes about the insurance are included in the referral.

It is the CSS caseworker's responsibility to notify the NC FAST worker of any changes to the CP's address, phone number, or SSN, so it is very important that the participant data be kept updated in order to create and send triggers to NC FAST automatically. If CP or child data (for example, change of address) is updated and the CSS caseworker learns of this before the NC FAST worker, the CSS caseworker must send a "note" to inform the NC FAST worker.

NC FAST TRIGGERS

GENERAL INFORMATION

"Triggers" are sets of data that are exchanged between NC FAST (North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology) and ACTS. A trigger is assigned a number based on the type of data that it contains.

This topic contains information on the following subjects:

1. [Triggers from NC FAST to ACTS;](#)
2. [Triggers from ACTS to NC FAST;](#)
3. [NC FAST Triggers in error.](#)

NC FAST TO ACTS TRIGGERS

ACTS receives these triggers immediately during a Public Assistance (PA) case referral or overnight if updating data on existing PA cases. (When ACTS receives a PA case referral or update, it notifies the responsible caseworker of the type of data that was received.)

ACTS TO NC FAST TRIGGERS

NC FAST receives these trigger during nightly processing. If a PA case is created in ACTS, triggers are sent to NC FAST when participant or case data is added/ updated, when CSS sends a request for updated

data to NC FAST, when CSS responds to a request for updated data from NC FAST, or when a CSS caseworker sends notes to NC FAST.

NC FAST TRIGGERS IN ERROR

Sometimes NC FAST triggers are not transmitted properly, all of the necessary information is not received, or ACTS identifies multiple matches for a participant. When these situations occur, ACTS notifies the responsible caseworker that the trigger has problems which need to be identified and corrected.

ACTS also informs the responsible caseworker when other situations arise involving the case structure and/or PA case status. Caseworkers must use their knowledge of the case to decide which course of action best suits the situation and correct and reapply triggers in error as soon as possible.

END

[Return to TOC](#)