

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO. ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 35-2020
EFS_FNS_AL-35-2020**

Food and Nutrition Services

TO: County Directors of Social Services

ATTENTION: Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)

DATE: August 27, 2020

SUBJECT: Telephonic Signature for Food and Nutrition Services Applications and Recertifications (Amended)

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 1, 2020

PRIORITY: For Information and Action

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) allow states to request an option to use telephonic signatures on applications and recertifications. North Carolina does not have the technological ability to meet the requirements of this option under normal circumstances. However, USDA has waived some of the normal telephonic signature requirements for applications and recertifications received between September 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic . The Division has accepted the telephonic signatures waiver to provide workers more flexibility to receive and process the applications and recertifications while still promoting social distancing.

II. WHAT APPLICATIONS DOES THE WAVIER APPLY TO?

This option applies to all applications and recertifications received in the local agency with a date of application/recertification between September 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. The worker must take specific actions to document and to meet reporting requirements.

III. WHAT ACTIONS ARE REQUIRED BY THE WORKER?

A. Applications:

1. **DSS- 8207 Application for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) form is received unsigned in the agency. The worker must take the following actions:**

The worker must make at least one attempt to contact FNS household by telephone, if telephone number is available.

- a. If the worker successfully contacts the FNS household by telephone take the following actions:
 - Review the DSS-8207 document with the FNS household and complete the interview.
 - Document on the signature line of the DSS-8207 the client's name, date, and time of application. The completed DSS-8207 will serve as the summary of the information and client's responses indicating agreement or disagreement.
 - Document "Telephone Signature" in the Income Support Application → Administration Tab → Notes. This **must** be a standalone note and **cannot** contain any additional characters or spaces. It is imperative that the worker enter the note in NC FAST as it will be used to meet the USDA reporting requirements for this waiver.
- b. If the worker cannot contact the FNS household take the following actions:
 - Return a copy of the DSS-8207 signature page per normal policy. There is no filed application until the FNS household returns the signature page or calls in and completes the telephone signature. If the FNS household subsequently calls the worker follow instructions above.

2. FNS applicant household calls agency and wishes to complete an application for FNS. The worker must take the following actions:

Offer to complete the application or schedule an appointment, within 1 day, to complete the interview on the phone with the FNS household.

- a. Complete the NC FAST guided interview or the DSS-8207 over the phone.
 - NC FAST guided interview: Document in the Income Support Application case notes the name, date, and time of application. The completed guided interview will serve as the summary of the information and client's responses indicating agreement or disagreement.
 - DSS-8207: Document on the signature line of the DSS-8207 the client's name, date, and time of application. The completed DSS-8207 will serve as the summary of the information and client's responses indicating agreement or disagreement.
 - Document "Telephone Signature" in the Income Support Application → Administration Tab → Notes. This **must** be a standalone note and

cannot contain any additional characters or spaces. It is imperative that the worker enter the note in NC FAST as it will be used to meet the USDA reporting requirements for this waiver.

- b. If FNS household cannot complete the interview or the worker is unable to contact the household to complete the interview, mail the FNS household a DSS-8207 and follow normal policy. There is no filed application until the FNS household calls in and completes the telephone signature or files a signed application. If the FNS household subsequently calls the worker follow instructions above.

B. Recertifications:

1. DSS- 2435 Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Notice of Expiration and Interview Recertification form is received unsigned in the agency. The worker must take the following actions:

Worker must make at least one attempt to contact FNS household by telephone, if telephone number is available.

- a. If the worker successfully contacts the FNS household by telephone take the following actions:
 - Review the DSS-2435 document with the FNS household and complete the interview.
 - Document on the signature line of the DSS-2435 the client's name, date, and time of application. The completed DSS-2435 will serve as the summary of the information and client's responses indicating agreement or disagreement.
 - Document "Telephone Signature" in the Product Delivery Case → Case Details → Notes. This **must** be a standalone note and **cannot** contain any additional characters or spaces. It is imperative that the worker enter the note in NC FAST as it will be used to meet the USDA reporting requirements for this waiver.
- b. If the worker cannot contact the FNS household take the following actions:
 - Return a copy of the DSS-2435 signature page per normal policy. There is no filed recertification until the FNS household completes the telephone signature or returns the signed DSS-2435. If the FNS household subsequently calls the worker follow instructions above.

2. FNS applicant household calls agency and wishes to complete a recertification for FNS. The worker must take the following actions:

Offer to complete the DSS-2435 or schedule an appointment to complete the DSS-2435, within 1 day, on the phone with the FNS household.

- a. Complete the DSS-2435 over the phone.

- Document on the signature line of the DSS-2435 the client's name, date, and time of application. The completed DSS-2435 will serve as the summary of the information and client's responses indicating agreement or disagreement.
 - Document "Telephone Signature" in the Product Delivery Case → Case Details → Notes. This **must** be a standalone note and **cannot** contain any additional characters or spaces. It is imperative that the worker enter the note in NC FAST as it will be used to meet the USDA reporting requirements for this waiver.
- b. If FNS household cannot complete the interview or the worker is unable to contact the household to complete the interview, mail the FNS household a DSS-2435 and follow normal policy. There is no filed recertification until the FNS household completes the telephone signature or returns the signed DSS-2435

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective for all applications and all timely, untimely, and late FNS recertifications with a date of application/recertification between September 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. Submit any questions regarding this policy to Operational Support Team (OST) at DSS.Policy.Questions@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Deputy Director
Economic and Family Services Section

DL/rc