

CHANGE NOTICE FOR MANUAL

DATE: June 8,2026
MANUAL: WORK FIRST MANUAL
TO: County Directors of Social Services
CHANGE NO: EFS-WF-CN-04-2026
SUBJECT: Policy Updates
EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2026

I. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this change notice is to inform county staff of updates to the Work First Policy regarding Short-Term Services and Benefits. Administrative Letter EFS-WF- AL -01-2017: Work First Services for Low Income Families, EFS-WF-AL-01-2019: Federal Poverty Income Guidelines and EFS-WF-02-2013: TANF State Plan and NC FAST Policy Implementation have also been incorporated into Policy Section 102. Administrative Letters EFS-WF-AL-01-2017, EFS-WF-01-2019, and EFS-WF-02-2013 are now obsolete.

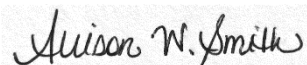
II. SPECIFIC CHANGES

- Section II: Benefit Diversion: Updated to reflect Benefit Diversion must be offered in all counties, applications may be taken by telephone, telephonic signatures are acceptable, case managers must offer the DSS-5327 Learning Needs Screening Tool (LNST) to all families, the DSS-5330 Learning Needs Screening Waiver must be completed, and all documentation must be uploaded to NC FAST. Updated to reflect face-to-face interviews are no longer required and telephonic signatures may be accepted.
- Section III: Emergency Assistance: Updated to reflect the Work First Emergency Assistance Application (DSS-8169) is the required application; applications may be taken by telephone with telephonic signatures accepted; families are entitled to an earned income disregard of 27.5%; case managers must offer the DSS-5327 Learning Needs Screening Tool (LNST) to all families, the DSS-5330 Learning Needs Screening Waiver must be completed.
- Section IV: Work First Services for Low Income Families at or Below 200% of Poverty: Updated to reflect applications may be taken by telephone, telephonic signatures are acceptable, families are entitled to a 27.5% earned income disregard, case managers must offer the DSS-5327 Learning Needs Screening Tool (LNST) to all families, the DSS-5330 Learning Needs Screening Waiver must be completed and all documentation uploaded to NC FAST.

III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

These changes are effective **July 1, 2026**. Please contact your Continuous Quality Improvement Specialist (CQIS) at DSS.Policy.Questions@dhhs.nc.gov with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allison W. Smith". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Allison W. Smith, Deputy Director
Division of Social Services
Economic and Family Services

AWS/peb

Attachments:

WF 102
DSS – 8657
DSS – 8169