

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO. ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 11-2020  
EFS\_FNS\_AL-11-2020**

**Food and Nutrition Services**

**TO:** County Directors of Social Services

**ATTENTION:** Food and Nutrition Services

**DATE:** April 17, 2020

**SUBJECT:** H and I Controlled Substance Felons Assessments during COVID-19 Pandemic

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon Receipt

**PRIORITY:** For Information and Action

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

The unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 state of emergency and related stay at home orders have disrupted how services are delivered by the county departments of social services, including the ability of Qualified Professionals in Substance Abuse (QPSA) to perform assessments for those Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) applicants that have H or I controlled substance felony offenses in North Carolina.

**A. IMPLEMENTATION:**

Applicant households that contain an individual with a H or I controlled substance felony are required to successfully complete and/or participate in an approved substance abuse program. This requirement is being temporarily suspended until their next recertification. The individuals must still meet their minimum 6-month minimum disqualification period per FNS 290.02 A. 1.

1. The worker must explain to the FNS unit that the requirement to successfully complete an assessment with the local area mental health has not been waived. The requirement is being suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will be required at their next recertification.
2. The worker must take the following actions to enter evidence and document the suspension of the requirement in NC FAST:
  - a. Enter a sanction in NC FAST using the first day of the month following the last month of the certification period as the start date. Do not enter an end date.
  - b. Document in the NC FAST notes that the initial assessment was waived due to COVID-19 pandemic and the individual must comply at the next recertification.

c. Normal policy as outlined in FNS 290 applies at the next recertification.

**Example:**

- Date of application: 4/24/2020.
- Date of conviction: 1/2/2018.
- Certification period assigned: April 2020 to September 2020.
- The worker will enter a sanction in NC FAST using start date of 10/1/2020 and no end date.
- The worker will document in the NC FAST notes that the initial assessment was waived due to COVID-19 pandemic and the individual must comply at the next recertification.

**II. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy is effective upon receipt for any pending applications and all new applications taken up to and including June 30, 2020. Submit any questions regarding this policy to Operational Support Team (OST) at [DSS.Policy.Questions@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DSS.Policy.Questions@dhhs.nc.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Locklear".

David Locklear, Deputy Director  
Economic and Family Services Section

DL/rc