

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES  
EFS\_FNS\_AL 9-2018**

**Food and Nutrition Services Certification Period Extension**

**(September 20, 2018)**

**(Food and Nutrition Services)**

**TO:** County Directors of Social Services

**ATTENTION:** Food and Nutrition Services Managers and Supervisors

**DATE:** September 20, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Food and Nutrition Services Certification Period Extension

**EFFECTIVE:** (Information Only) Upon Receipt

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

On September 13, 2018, Hurricane Florence brought severe flooding and power outages to many counties throughout North Carolina. Many families and individuals were directly impacted by Hurricane Florence which forced them to temporarily relocate outside of their counties and forced local department of social services offices to close temporarily. The Department requested a waiver from The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) which allowed the extension of Food and Nutrition Services Certification periods for several counties impacted by Hurricane Florence. This extension only applies to certain counties identified within this letter. This waiver will ensure families impacted by the hurricane will be able to continue receipt of their benefits without interruption while counties work to provide disaster relief.

**II. POLICY PROCEDURES**

USDA approved a Certification Extension Waiver for September 2018 and October 2018 recertifications for the 18 Individual Assistance (IA) counties: **Beaufort, Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Duplin, Harnett, Jones, Lenoir, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, Robeson, Sampson, and Wayne.** The certification period for all FNS September and October 2018 recertifications, including SNAP cases, will be extended for six months. This extension includes recertifications for both months that are, in-progress and not started. This does not include those that are pending closure or late August recertifications. The in-progress recertifications will be closed so that NC FAST can extend the certification period. If the county has received or receives the recertification form they are not required to react to information reported on the form, however if the client reports changes outside of the recertification form that result in an increase in benefits, the county is to react to the change. For recertification forms received document on the form that the certification period was extended due to Hurricane Florence and place the form in the case file. If a non-disaster county receives the recertification form for a client in

a disaster county, follow the same process as above. October recertification forms will not be mailed out in the 18 counties listed.

- September recertification will be extended - October 2018 to March 2019
- October recertification will be extended - November 2018 to April 2019

Note: This extension does not apply to August late recertifications. Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) actively receiving their “free” months will be given a good cause exemption for the month of September. ABAWDs whose last free month is September will also receive the exemption. October then becomes their last free month. NC FAST will automatically recode accordingly.

**Example 1:**

**ABAWD prior to exemption:**

July	August	September	October
Free month 1	Free month 2	Free month 3	

**ABAWD after the exemption:**

July	August	September	October
Free month 1	Free month 2	Good Cause	Free month 3

**Example 2:**

**ABAWD prior to exemption:**

August	September	October	November
Free month 1	Free month 2	Free month 3	

**ABAWD after the exemption:**

August	September	October	November
Free month 1	Good Cause	Free month 2	Free month 3

Notices will be sent to all households explaining the certification extension as well as the ABAWD good cause for the month of September.

**III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS**

The Certification Extension Waiver applies only to September and October 2018 recertifications in the above-mentioned IA counties. No action is needed by the county, NC FAST will complete the automated extension. Submit any questions regarding this information to the Operational Support Team (OST) at [dss.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:dss.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov).

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Deputy Director  
Economic and Family Services