NC Department of Health and Human Services

Division of Social Services

Economic and Family Services

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Regional Meetings

October 2023

Domestic Violence (DV)

Definition of Domestic Violence (DV) In North Carolina

"The commission of one or more of the following acts upon an aggrieved party or upon a minor child residing with or in the custody of the aggrieved party by a person with whom the aggrieved party has or has had a personal relationship, but does not include acts of self-defense:

- Attempting to cause bodily injury, or intentionally causing bodily injury; or

- Placing the aggrieved party or a member of the aggrieved party's family or household in fear of imminent serious bodily injury or continued harassment that rises to such a level as to inflict substantial emotional distress; or

- Committing any act of rape or sexual battery against another person."

Source: North Carolina General Statue 50.B-1.14-20, 14-27-21

Expanded Definition of Domestic Violence

The Consolidated Appropriations Act also expanded the Domestic Violence policy to included a few additional items:

- **Stalking**

- **Dating Violence**

- **Sexual Harassment**

Definition of Stalking

Pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a partner that causes fear or concern for one's own safety or the safety of someone close to the victim.

- The intimate partner violence section on the Center for Disease Control's website outlines that stalking tactics can include:
  - Unwanted following and watching of a victim
  - Unwanted approaching or showing up in places, such as home, workplace or school
  - Unwanted use of GPS technology to track locations
  - Leaving strange or potentially threatening items for the victim to find

NOTE: Stalking is often considered to be aggravated when the conduct involved also violates a restraining order protecting the victim.

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence

Definition of Dating Violence

"Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

- **the length of the relationship;**
- **the type of relationship; and**
- **the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship."**

https://www.justice.gov/ovw/dating-violence

Sexual Harassment and Domestic Violence

The crimes of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking can also constitute sexual harassment when motivated by a person's sex.

National Domestic Violence Statistics

- **Nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner**

- **Every 9 seconds a woman is assaulted or beaten.**

- **Intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crimes.**

- **19% of domestic violence involves a weapon.**

Source: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

National Domestic Violence Statistics (continued)

1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men experience severe intimate partner such as:

- **physical violence,**

- **intimate partner contact sexual violence, and/or**

- **intimate partner stalking with impacts such as:**
  - **injury,**
  - **fearfulness,**
  - **post-traumatic stress disorder,**
  - **use of victim services, and**
  - **contraction of sexually transmitted diseases, etc.**

Source: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

National Domestic Violence Statistics (continued)

Children and Domestic Violence:

1 in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year, and 90% of these children are eyewitnesses to this violence.

Children who witness domestic violence or are victims of abuse themselves are at serious risk for long-term physical and mental health problems.

Source: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

North Carolina Domestic Violence Statistics

35.2% of North Carolina women and 30.3% of North Carolina men experience intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner sexual violence and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes.

In a single day in 2020, 75% of North Carolina's domestic violence programs served 1,152 survivors and their children. 569 survivors and their children found refuge in emergency shelter or transitional housing provided by local domestic violence programs. Another 57 requests for services went unmet due to lack of resources.

In a 24-hour survey period in 2020 in North Carolina, local and state hotlines answered 540 calls, averaging more than 23 hotline calls every hour.

Source: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

North Carolina Domestic Violence Statistics (continued)

- **In North Carolina in 2023, there have been 28 intimate partner homicides between Jan 1- March 28.**

- **Between 2010 and 2016, North Carolina had 745 domestic violence related homicides.**

- **As of December 31, 2020, North Carolina had submitted 2,158 misdemeanor domestic violence convictions and 355 active protective order records to the NICS Index.**

Source: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Family Violence Option

Family Violence Option

The majority of states have adopted the Family Violence Option.

These states must establish and enforce standards and procedures to screen for and identify domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking.

States that have adopted the option also must provide TANF applicants and participants with information about the assistance available for survivors.

North Carolina adopted the Family Violence Option to assist those participants who are or have been victims of family violence by providing the necessary tools to address the issues related to the abuse. For some participants, the Option provides an opportunity for a waiver of one or more Work First requirements.

Family Violence Option

- **Adults seeking Work First assistance, including payees in child only cases and teen heads of household are given information about family violence and the services available to deal with the issue.**

- **If a client self-discloses or the worker find evidence of family violence, the worker will discuss with the individual the services available to deal with the issue and makes any appropriate referrals.**

- **All Work First participants are notified of the potential to request a waiver of some or all of the Work First requirements.**

Family Violence Declaration- DSS 6966

Participant's Name _____

Notification of Family Violence Option

Family violence is defined a verbal, sexual, emotional, psychological and/or physical abuse between or among family members or intimate partners. You may be a victim of abuse if someone is:

- Keeping you isolated
- Making you feel like a prisoner
- Threatening or scaring you
- Taking control over your life
- Shaming or belittling you
- Forcing you into sexual acts
- Hitting, slapping, kicking, choking or in any way hurting you physically

Any disclosure of family abuse is voluntary.
The purpose of this notice is to inform you about possible abuse and let you know there is community support to help you with this situation. If you decide not to tell me today, you can change your mind at any time, and tell me or someone else.

Disclosure of family abuse is confidential.
However, as required by law, if there is evidence of children being abused, a report will be made to a child protective services agency.

Work First Participants
Work First provides participants with employment assistance, child care, transportation and, if necessary cash assistance. In order to receive cash assistance Work First Program participants subject to the work requirement are required, among other things, to go to work or participate in work activities.

If working, looking for a job, or going to school or job training may put you or your family in danger of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, you may be eligible for a temporary waiver of one or more Work First requirements after further assessment and development of a safety plan.

I have read and understand the above _____ Date _____
Work First Participant

I have explained the above information _____ Date_____
Worker

Would you like to speak to someone further about abuse in the family? __Yes __No

Distribution:
Original in case file
Copy to participant

DSS-6966 (rev. 10-09)
Economic and Family Services Section

All Active Work First cases including child-only cases should have this form completed by the head of the case during Work First interview.

Degrees of Domestic Violence

- **Domestic violence can be:**
  - Physical
  - Sexual
  - Emotional

- **Any other patterns of coercive behavior that influence another person within an intimate partner relationship.**

- **This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate someone, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, injure, or wound an intimate partner or minor child**

Source: https://www.justice.gov/ovw/domestic-violence#dv

Degrees of Domestic Violence

- **Physical Abuse includes:**
  - **Hitting,**
  - **slapping,**
  - **shoving,**
  - **grabbing,**
  - **pinching,**
  - **biting, and**
  - **hair pulling, etc.**

Source: https://www.justice.gov/ovw/domestic-violence#dv

Degrees of Domestic Violence

Sexual Abuse includes:

- **Coercing or attempting to coerce any sexual contact or behavior without consent.**

- **Sexual abuse includes, but is certainly not limited to, marital rape, attacks on sexual parts of the body, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or treating one in a sexually demeaning manner.**

Degrees of Domestic Violence

Emotional Abuse includes:

- **Undermining an individual's sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem is abusive.**

- **This may include, but is not limited to constant criticism, diminishing one's abilities, name-calling, or damaging one's relationship with his or her children.**

Source: https://www.justice.gov/ovw/domestic-violence#dv

Local County Mandate

Each county must develop a list of crisis centers in their areas for clients impacted by domestic violence. These centers should be specific on what services they provide such as:

- **Homeless shelters**

- **Food assistance**

- **Legal services**

- **Health services and Housing assistance**

- **Child care services**

- **Gender exclusive centers should be noted as well**

Local County Mandate

Local Counties must develop a comprehensive list of long-term supportive services in their areas for victims impacted by Domestic Violence such as:

- **Health Services**

- **Housing**

- **Child care**

- **Other essential services**

Nationwide and Statewide Resources

- 9-1-1 for imminent danger to self or family

- National Domestic Violence Hotline(800)799-SAFE(7233) or text "START" to 88788

- North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence(NCCADV.org)

- Local YWCA(Youth Women Christian Association)

- Legal Aid of North Carolina(http://www.legalaidnc.org/get-help/Apply-Online)

- Domesticshelters.org(https://www.domesticshelters.org/help/nc)

- Local United Way Organization

- Victimconnect.org 1-855-4VICTIM (855-484-2846)

Work First Monitoring

Common Findings and Strategies

Cash Assistance Findings

Finding	Policy Support
• **Cash Assistance Application and Review Documentation Workbook incomplete/not completed in entirety.**	• **WF policy 104 I. A.,104 C.,104 D., and WF policy 201 I. B.**
• **Family CAP child included in the cash assistance budget/evidence not entered.**	• **WF policy 106 1. A and Job Aids: Adding Family Cap Exemption Evidence and Viewing Family Cap Status**
• **Family CAP evaluation incorrect 10th month**	• **WF policy 106 III and Work First Family Cap Evaluation Form**

DCDL EFS-WF-07-2023 published August 28, 2023

Cash Assistance Findings

Finding	Policy Support
• **Online Verification System (OVS) not run at application and/or recertification; OVS not run on all individuals in the household.**	• **WF Policy 104 I. L, WF Policy 114 II, and WF Policy 201 I.B. 21**
• **DSS – 8218A, Work First Substance Use Screening Notice and DSS – 8218, AUDIT/DAST-10 completed and/or provided to SSI recipients or non-parent caretakers**	• **WF Policy 104 B. II**
• **Notice of Benefits, DSS 8108 or DSS 6244, not completed.**	• **WF Policy 264, and WF Policy 104 II**

DCDL EFS-WF-07-2023 published August 28, 2023

Employment Service Findings

Finding

- **Initial Outcome Plan (OCP) not generated within five days of application. No MRA-B completed.**
- **Outcome Plan (OCP)/Mutual Responsibility Agreement (MRA-B) not revised and updated every 12 weeks as required.**
- **Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs not completed per policy and/or revised every 12 weeks as required.**
- **Future dated sanction not entered for non-compliance.**

Policy Support

- WF Policy 118 V. A., WF Policy 118 V. B. and WF Policy 117 I. B.

- WF Policy 117 I. D, 117. III. And WF Policy 118 IV. B.

- WF Policy 117 I. E. 3. and 117 II

- EFS_WF_AL-10-2020 (Amended)

DCDL EFS-WF-07-2023 published August 28, 2023

Work First Services for Low Income Families below 200% of Poverty

Finding

- **Learning Needs Screening Waiver checked instead of initialed.**

- **Cases not closed timely in SIS.**

Policy Support

- **WF Policy 117 I. E. 4. and Form DSS-5330 Learning Needs Screening Tool Waiver & Consent Agreement.**

- **WF Policy 102. IV. D**

List of open cases can be found:
CSDW>DHHS Main Document>DSS>Services & Day Sheet>State Sanctioned>NCP Cases and Cases with Income <= 200% FPL Active as of Current Date

DCDL EFS-WF-07-2023 published August 28, 2023

IV-D Non-Cooperation

Finding

- **Failed to apply child support enforcement non-compliance suspended sanction**

Policy Support

- **[WF Policy 120](#).II. A and B, and [Job Aids](#): Creating or Disregarding an Active Sanction and Accepting a Recommend Sanction**

REMINDER: Run report weekly/monthly based on county size to ensure cases are reacted to timely.
XPTR: DHREJ NCFNONCOOP WTHOT IND SANC

DCDL EFS-WF-07-2023 published August 28, 2023

Single County Audit Findings

Finding

- **Second party reviews not completed as outlined in policy.**
- **Errors noted through second party reviews and no follow up to show the errors were corrected.**

- **Inadequate documentation**
  - **Residency verification, no signed MRA, Child Support not updated, income verifications not included**

Example, if the case worker **processed** 4 applications in a month then one of the four applications should have a second party review completed.

Policy Support

- [Administrative Letter 7-2018](#)

- **Administrative Letter 7-2018**
  - **County second party review protocol**

Work First Monitoring
Knowledge Check

What section of the Work First Policy Manual includes the Family Cap Evaluation?

    a.   **Section 120**

    b.   **Section 106**

    c.   **Section 118**

The substance use screening test, Audit/DAST-10 applies to every Work First case?

    True or False?

Work First Monitoring
Knowledge Check

The Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs must be revised every _____ weeks or as family circumstances change.

Complete the Work First Cash Assistance Application and Review Documentation Workbook (DSS-8228) with the case head/payee and obtain a signature. All questions must be _____ and documented.

Work First Monitoring Knowledge Check

The initial Outcome Plan (MRA-B) must be open in NC FAST and completed when within what time frame?

a. before application approved

b. The day of the application

c. Within 5 days of application

Group Discussion

Group Discussion

Ground Rules:

- **If you are sitting with someone from your agency, you must move to a different table.**

- **Sit with someone who does work with Work First, if WF is not your primary program**

- **Listen and engage**

Question 1

How does your county provide Work First Services for Families at or below 200%?

For example:

What does your county do? How are these services provided

Do you have external partners you collaborate with?

If you could provide these services differently, what would you do?

Question 2

If your county has Employment Service cases, how are you working with the families?

How has the transition to enforcing sanctions affected your cases?

Are families beginning to turn information in?

Have you been able to utilize Work Experience sites as much as you were able to pre-pandemic?

If not, how could you think differently to encourage participation?

Group Discussion

What did you learn? Please provide one response per table for each question:

How does your county provide Work First Services for Families at or below 200%?

If you could provide these services differently, what would you do?

How is your county providing Employment Services?

How are you engaging your work eligible parents?

Work First Outcome Plan Management

Creating Activities & NC Fast Functionality

Outcome Plan Management

- **Outcome plans and Mutual Responsibility Agreement's are required for work eligible individuals.**
  - Work eligible – WF 103 III. A.

- [Job aids](#) **to assist with creating Outcome Plan:**
  - Work First Work Eligibility Referral
  - Creating a Referral to Work First Employment Services

Outcome Plan Management Continued

- **Each outcome plan should list an objective.**

- **Objectives are generally items such as obtaining full time employment; however should be tailored to the participants plan.**

- **Case managers should assign activities which aid in meeting the objectives or items which have been explained and discussed with customers. For example:**
  - **Job Quit policy**
  - **Next appointment is scheduled for**
  - **Return paperwork bi-weekly to case manager**

Outcome Plan Management Continued

- **Activities are the specific items the customer is agreeing to complete in order to accomplish the goal.**

- **If the goal is to obtain employment, possible activities could include:**
  - **Register with NC Works for Work Registration**
  - **Attend Job Readiness classes**
  - **Job Search**

Outcome Plan Management Continued

- **When assigning activities case managers should consider:**
  - **Can the activity count towards federal participation? (WF 118 VI)**
  - **How often should the customer be engaging in this activity? i.e. frequency**

Family Type	Single Parent Family with Child Under Age 6	Single Parent Family with Child Age 6 and Above	Two Parent Family Receiving Federally Funded Child Care	Two Parent Family Not Receiving Federally Funded Child Care
Core Hour Requirement	Average of 20 hours per week	Average of 20 hours per week	Average of 50 hours per week	Average of 30 hours per week
Maximum Allowable Non-Core Hours	N/A	Up to an average of 10 hours per week	Up to an average of 5 hours per week	Up to an average of 5 hours per week
Total Required Hours	Average of 20 hours per week	Average of 30 hours per week	Average of 55 hours per week	Average of 35 hours per week

NC DHHS WF Policy Manual 118. VI.

Outcome Plan Management Continued

Mapping Outcome Plan Activities to Federal Components

Last Updated: 02/14/2019

Overview

This job aid describes the activities available on Outcome Plans that are associated with Federal Components. All other activities are not Federal Components and therefore do not count toward participation rates.

Action:	Federal Component(s):
Attend Job Fair	• Job Search and Job Readiness
Attend Job Readiness Class	• Job Search and Job Readiness
Attend Orientation for CNA Program	• Vocational Educational Training • Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment
Attend budgeting class	• Job Search and Job Readiness
Attend classes as scheduled	• Vocational Educational Training • Job Skills Directly Related to Employment • Education Directly Related to Employment (not completed high school or equivalent) • Secondary School or GED course • GED/HS Completion for Teen HOH

Outcome Plan Management Continued

- **When assigning activities, the case manager would create a new action in the Activities tab and select the applicable radio button to select the activity.**

Outcome Plan Management Continued

If an activity should remain on the MRA-B, no end date should be entered until after participation has been keyed. The activity can be re-created for the next period of time.

Outcome Plan Management Continued

- **Setting the frequency and duration establishes the total monthly hours for the activity.**

1 hour each week x 4.3636 equals total monthly hours of 4.3636

Round to 4

Work First Manual Section 118. VII

Outcome Plan Management Continued

- **Print MRA-B from Administration tab in the Outcome Plan and mark "sent."**

- **Have customer sign and date MRA –B.**

  Then time to key participation.
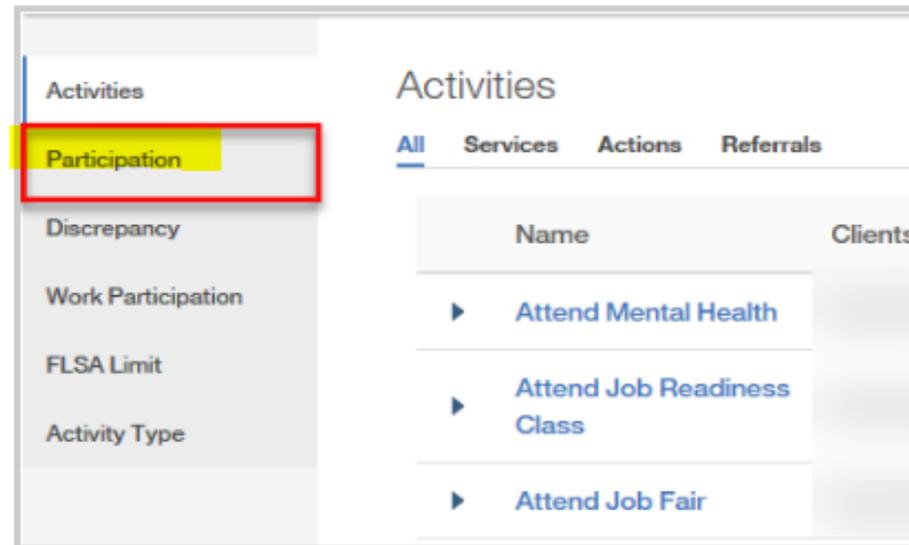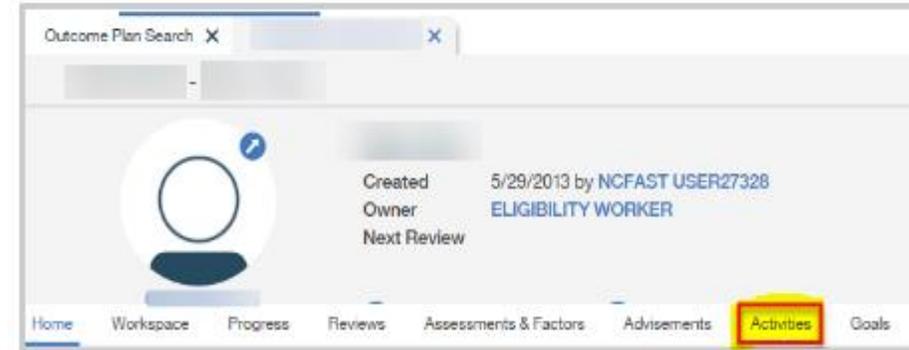
Outcome Plan Management Continued

- **NC FAST allows case managers to record daily participation or scheduled participation.**

- **Recording scheduled participation will automatically populate the amount of time scheduled in the frequency and duration into the participation folder for the activity.**

- **Recording daily participation requires manual entry for specific day/times to ensure documentation corresponds to the information entered in NC FAST.**

Entering Participation Hours job aid

Outcome Plan Management Continued

- **An important reminder when keying participation hours is if hours are intended to count towards participation the appropriate component should be selected from the drop down.**

- **If they are non-countable hours, or custom activities, case managers should select the appropriate drop down.**

- **If excused absences are intended to count towards participation they should be entered as Federal Excused.**

Work First Manual Section 118 VIII D. 2.

Outcome Plan Management

- **Entering Participation Hours**

- **Viewing Participation hours**

- **Creating Work First Outcome Plan Goal Objectives and Activities**

Federal Reporting Reminder ACF-199

ACF-199 Errors

1. **Using Effective Date of Change**
   - **Using the Effective Date of Change has a negative impact on ACF-199. When the Effective Date of Change is used it represents several pieces of evidence active for each household member with no end date. ACF-199 is unable to determine which evidence should be active for the household members.**

2. **Closing Cases with In-Correct Evidence**
   - **Closing a case with incorrect evidence impacts the Assistance Unit and prior determinations. It appears to ACF-199 that clients were receiving payments and were not eligible for Cash Assistance.**

3. **Social Security Numbers**
   - **Clients must have or applied for a Social Security Number to receive Cash Assistance. Not inputting the client Social Security reflects that the client is receiving untitled benefits. It is very important to add the Social Security Number once the caseworker receives.**

Correcting Effective Date of Change Process for ACF-199 Reporting

- *Important:* **When updating evidence, it should be end-dated for the last day of the month of the current certification period. New evidence should start with the first day of the month for the new certification period. Case managers should not use effective date of change for Student or Living Arrangement evidence.**

How to recognize the use of Effective Date of Change

1. Navigate to the Income Support Case

2. Select the applicable evidence (Student, Living Arrangement, etc.)

3. Select the Evidence tab and select the applicable hyperlink

4. Determine the piece of evidence you wish to review and toggle into the evidence.

How to recognize the use of Effective Date of Change

How to recognize the use of Effective Date of Change

Toggle into the first line item under 'Change Summary.'

This screen shot and image demonstrates the effect of the Effective Date of Change has on data when pulled for submission for ACF-199. As you can see in the chart it appears the participant has multiple open/active pieces of evidence with the same start date and no end date.

EVIDENCEID	NFSUBSIDYPROVIDERTYPE	STARTDATE	ENDDATE
91515921089	NFSPT5002	2018-04-01 00:00:00	(null)
183858716662	NFSPT5001	2018-04-01 00:00:00	(null)
70585652722	NFSPT5001	2018-04-01 00:00:00	(null)
120249987168	NFSPT5002	2018-04-01 00:00:00	(null)

How to correct the Effective Date of Change

1. **Find the most recent change and select the action (…) menu.**
   - *Take note of the start and end dates periods, as you will need them to add new evidence.*

2. **Select Delete.**

How to correct the Effective Date of Change continued:

Delete Active Evidence ⓘ ⓧ

Are you sure you want to delete this evidence?

[Yes] [No]

3. Locate the next most recent change and delete. Entries should show 'Active – Pending Deletion

	Change Summary	Period	Source	Status
▶	12/11/2018 - Case Audit	12/31/2015 - 12/31/2022		Active - Pending Deletion
▶	12/21/2022 - Case Audit	1/1/2023 -		Active - Pending Deletion

How to correct the Effective Date of Change continued:

4. Navigate to the Evidence tab on the Income Support Case.
5. Apply changes to evidence pending deletion.
6. Click on applicable evidence hyperlink to return to the piece of evidence.

7. End date the active evidence with the appropriate end date.
8. The case manager will then need to add in the new pieces of evidence by clicking 'New.'
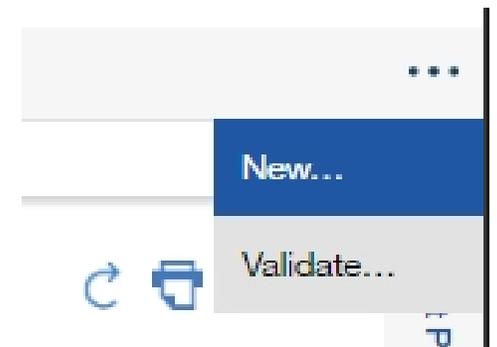
	Change Summary	Period	Source	Status
▶	12/11/2018 - Case Audit	1/1/2015 -		Active

How to correct the Effective Date of Change continued:

9. **Enter new evidence.**

	Attends Holly Shelter Junior School Full Time	1/1/2023 -	1	NCFAST USER24011 on 8/7/2023 14:33
	Attends Holly Shelter Junior School Full Time	1/1/2022 - 12/31/2022	1	NCFAST USER24011 on 8/7/2023 14:33
	Attends RACHEL FREEMAN ELEMENTARY Elementary Full Time	1/1/2021 - 12/31/2021	1	NCFAST USER24011 on 8/7/2023 14:33
	Attends RACHEL FREEMAN ELEMENTARY Elementary Full Time	1/1/2015 - 12/31/2020	1	NCFAST USER24011 on 8/7/2023 14:33

10. **Once evidence has been updated, complete all verifications, and apply changes. Review and accept the changed decision, if necessary.**

Reminders for Ongoing Cases

- **Do not use the effective date of change when making updates to evidence.**
  - **This will cause errors for ACF-199 reporting.**

- **Changes are only necessary at review or if there is a change that will affect the eligibility of the case.**
  - ***At Review/Recertification**, the evidence should be end dated with the last day of the certification period, and the new evidence started with the first of the month of the new certification period.*
  - ***At any other time,** end date evidence with the last day of the month of change and start the new evidence with the first of the next month.*

Reminders for Ongoing Cases continued:

- **It is not necessary to end date and add new student evidence for school breaks (Spring, Summer, etc.). End dating student evidence due to school breaks can cause ineligibility.**

- **It is not necessary to update Living Arrangement evidence at every review if there are no changes to the household's living situation, and/or housing subsidy information.**

  - **At review, simply document that living arrangement was re-verified.**

Closing Cases

- **Any changes to evidence should only reflect the household's current circumstances and should only impact ongoing determinations.**

- **Editing evidence that is not related to the household circumstances to receive an ineligible determination will negatively impact federal reporting.**

- **Verification of Change in Situation ([DSS-1662](DSS-1662)) should be used to verify changes**

Case Scenario

- **In July, the case manager receives notification the case head has started working. In order to close the case timely the case manager changes evidence in order to receive an ineligible decision so the case will close.**
- **The case manager changes residency evidence for the household members retroactively to indicate they are not a North Carolina resident.**

Description	Period
Is not a North Carolina resident.	8/1/2023 -
Is not a North Carolina resident.	8/1/2023 -
Is not a North Carolina resident.	4/26/2023 -
Is not a North Carolina resident.	4/26/2023 -

Case Scenario

- **What do you think this changed?**

- *This generated an ineligible decision which allowed caseworker to close the case. This also resulted in ineligibility from the case start date and household members not being included in the assistance unit for months prior to the month of change.*

Determination Results

Coverage Period	Decision
5/1/2023 - 8/31/2023	Not Eligible
4/26/2023 - 4/30/2023	Not Eligible

Closing Cases

- **When closing a case, prior determinations should remain the same.**

- **ACF-199 is negatively impacted if prior eligible determinations are changed, as it may appear that the case is issuing benefits on cases with no household members in the Assistance Unit.**

Social Security Numbers

To receive Work First Family Assistance, each participant must:

- Provide a social security number or
- Apply for a social security number

At the first review after the family begins receiving Work First Cash Assistance, the case manager must ensure there are social security numbers for all eligible family members in the case. This includes the family members who had to apply for a number.

- Unless the family provides the SSN for all eligible members, they cannot receive Work First Cash Assistance.

Helpful Job Aids

- **Closing a Case**

- **Closing an Outcome Plan**

- **Income & Expense Evidence Wizards – Income Support**

- **ACF-199 Fact Sheet**

Interviewing Skills

The Purpose of an Effective Interview

- **One of the primary and key duties of an eligibility worker is to interview clients.**

- **Interviewing provides the opportunity for both the worker and the client to seek and give information.**

- **While most interviews occur at the time of application and recertification, anytime you and your client communicate, essentially you are conducting an interview.**

The Purpose of an Effective Interview Continued

- **Interviewing gives applicants the opportunity to gain an understanding of the agency, programs, benefits, and the requirements they must meet to satisfy program guidelines.**
- **It also provides an opportunity to educate clients about other services and agencies that may offer programs and services they need.**
- **An interview gives the client an opportunity to present information in their own words which may give you a better understanding of their situation.**

The Purpose of an Effective Interview Continued

- **By completing an effective interview, you will secure the information necessary in order to determine eligibility and it gives the client a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities.**

Client Interaction

- **Three of the most important traits for you to be a successful interviewer are empathy, communication, and professionalism.**

- **It is important to remember that clients are being asked personal questions followed by requests for verification of private information that they probably don't even discuss with close friends and family.**

- **Being sensitive to that and being tactful in how you interact is vital for easing the client's concerns.**

Client Interaction

Key Points to remember while interacting with clients:

- **People react differently to personal questions being asked of them.**

- **Recognize and eliminate barriers that may surface because of age, gender, language, and racial differences.**

- **The elderly, disabled, or illiterate client may require more of your time and assistance.**

- **Attitudes towards authority can in fact influence a client's interaction with you.**

- **You do not have to put up with abuse, such as bad language, physical threats violence etc.**

Open-Ended Questions

Advantages of Open-Ended Questions

- **Encourages more client participation**

- **Provides more complete explanation of answers**

- **Gathers more information**

Disadvantages of Open-Ended Questions

- **Allows the client to ramble**

- **Takes more time**

- **May result in some unnecessary, irrelevant disclosure of information**

What are some examples of open-ended questions?

- **Tell me what brought you into the agency today.**

- **Tell me about your situation.**

- **Tell me about the work that you do.**

- **Tell me about the money you received last month.**

- **Tell me how you paid the rent.**

- **Tell me about who lives in your home.**

Remember, asking leading questions is extremely important!

Closed-Ended Questions

Advantages of closed-ended questions

• **Shortens the interview time.**

Disadvantages of closed-ended questions

• **Allows for minimal client participation.**

• **Eliminates explanations and in turn, information.**

• **May appear to be an interrogation.**

What are some examples of closed-ended questions?

- **What type of bank accounts do you have?**

- **How many hours do you work?**

- **How many people live with you?**

How to make the most out of your interview

- **Try to resolve all verification issues during the interview so the case can be processed as quickly as possible.**

- **Use collateral contacts to verify eligibility information with third-party sources as allowed in policy.**
  - **For example, with FNS and Energy, calling the employer to verify income, contacting a provider to verify medical expenses, or calling the landlord to verify rent, etc.**

- **The more YOU can verify, the less time the application/recertification will be left pending.**

How to make the most out of your interview

- **It is important to remember that your body language says more than the words you speak!**

- **When interviewing your client, make eye contact and be an active listener!**

- **While listening to your client, nodding during the interview shows you hear what they are saying and is a non-verbal way of showing support to your client.**

- **When your body language is perceived as supportive and caring, the interview is more likely to render the results you are looking for.**

When should I conduct an interview?

- **At every application**

- **Once every 12 months for recertifications**

- **Any time information on the recertification is questionable**

- **In-person visits**

- **When client requests an interview (whether in-person or by phone)**

Time to Practice

Volunteer time!

Role Play Scenario #1

Worker: Good afternoon Mrs. Jones. So you're here to apply for help with your energy bill?

Mrs. Jones: (speaking softly) Yes. The company is getting ready to disconnect my lights and I won't have air conditioning. I don't get my Social Security check until the first of the month and that's over a week away. They are going to disconnect me on Friday. Can you help?

Worker: It's only supposed to be around 75 degrees for the next few weeks, it feels really good outside. Can't you open the window?

Mrs. Jones: I have asthma and the pollen is really bad right now. I can't open the window my asthma will flare up and I can't afford my rescue inhalers. What about my food?

Worker: Well, you could apply for food stamps- or maybe a replacement for your stamps – if your food goes bad. I'll have to check with my supervisor first. The temperatures are very reasonable, and I don't see where you're in a crisis because you could have used your money more wisely.

Role Play Scenario #1

- How did they feel the interview went?
- Was the worker judgmental? What was said that indicated this?
- Did the worker ask open ended questions? If so, which ones?
- Who was leading the conversation?

Role Play Scenario #2

Worker: Good afternoon, Mr. Bing. My name is Sally Smith, thank you for coming in today. Tell me what brought you into the agency today?

Mr. Bing: Well, I was dropping off custody papers for my great-granddaughter and I also need help with my light bill before it is disconnected. I don't get my Social Security check until the first of the month and that's over a week away and if I don't pay it, they are going to disconnect it on Friday. Then I won't have any air conditioning.

Worker: Can you tell me how you got behind on your bill?

Mr. Bing: My great-granddaughter came to live me. Her mother is now in jail, and no one knows where her father is. Anyway, it cost a lot more money to feed a 12-year-old than it does just myself. I have asthma and the pollen is too bad for me to open up the windows. I ran out of money and couldn't afford to get my rescue inhalers filled and my breathing has been terrible.

Worker: Mr. Bing, it sounds like without your electricity, you would be in a medical emergency. I see you also don't currently have Food and Nutrition services.

Mr. Bing: Yes, I would end up in the hospital without the air conditioning. I haven't had time to apply for FNS before today.

Role Play Scenario #2

Worker: Ok Mr. Bing, let's get started on both an Energy and FNS application. (Worker takes the applications)

Worker: Mr. Bing while you are here at the agency, do you have time to speak with another worker.

Mr. Bing: Yes, I allowed plenty of time since I wasn't sure how long I may have to wait.

Worker: Mr. Bing, since you know have custody of your great -granddaughter, I would like for you to see the Work First caseworker to see if you qualify for Work First for your granddaughter. It is a program where you can get a monthly payment for her if you qualify.

Mr. Bing: Yes, I would like to speak to someone about that program.

Worker: I will get the receptionist to sign you in to see that worker if that is ok. Is there anything else I can help you with while you're at the agency Mr. Bing?

Mr. Bing: No, I am good. Thank you for help and letting me know about the other programs.

Worker: It was nice to meet you and my pleasure to help you out. Let me walk you out.

Role Play Scenario #2

- How did the interview go?
- Did you sense any judgement?
- Were there any open ended questions?

Can you spot the incorrect interview question?

✓ Do you have any shelter expenses like rent, mortgage, or property taxes?

✓ Who lives with you?

✓ Are you working?

✓ Your only income is SSI, right?

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Who lives with you?

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⭐ Your only income is SSI, right?

Which one is the assumption-based leading question?

Do you rent or own your current residence?

Does anyone else live in the home with you?

Aren't you still working at Walmart?

Will your mother still help pay your light bill now that you are back to work?

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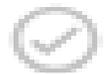
Interviewing Scenario #3

21-year-old comes in to apply for FNS and reports living alone at the same address used by parents for their FNS case.

Mother reported on her case that the applicant moved out two months ago and does not know the new address.

Applicant reports working at Amazon part-time.

Reports paying rent in the amount of $700 including utilities.

Client reports no income but states they have monthly expenses like rent and utilities. Should you ask the client how they meet their monthly obligations?

◯✓ Yes

◯✓ No

Client reports no income but states they have monthly expenses like rent and utilities. Should you ask the client how they meet their monthly obligations?

Yes

No