

NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Social Services

JOSH STEIN • Governor

DEVPUTTA SANGVAI • Secretary

YVONNE COPELAND • Director, Division of Child and Family Well-Being

October 16, 2025

Dear County Directors of Social Services,

Attention: Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Administrators, Managers and Supervisors

Subject: **Update on November 2025 Food and Nutrition Services benefits during federal shutdown**

Priority: **Information and Action**

Effective October 1, 2025, the federal government entered a shutdown due to a lapse in appropriations. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has notified state agencies that currently available funds are not sufficient to ensure full issuance of November 2025 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for households nationwide, including approximately 1.4 million North Carolinians who receive Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits. On October 10, 2025, USDA directed states to hold November 2025 issuance files to preserve maximum flexibility while it evaluates contingency options. In compliance with this directive, NC FAST will delay transmission of November 2025 issuance files to the State Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) contractor, Fidelity Insurance Services (FIS), until further direction from USDA.

USDA has indicated it is conducting fact-finding and information gathering to prepare for a potential contingency plan. NCDHHS is currently waiting for guidance from USDA to assess any impact to November FNS benefits for North Carolinians. In addition, USDA has not yet issued guidance regarding administrative cost coverage beyond October 2025. When additional guidance is received, NCDHHS will provide updates accordingly.

October FNS benefits have not been impacted. North Carolina households have received their October benefits as usual with regular October issuances continuing on normal issuance timelines. Any households newly approved during October will also receive their October benefits. NCDHHS will continue to issue benefit entitlements obligated for October 2025, regardless of whether the October 2025 applications are processed and approved after October 31st. Please review below for additional instructions and messaging.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES • ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES

LOCATION: 1915 Health Services Way Raleigh, NC 27607
MAILING ADDRESS: 2420 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2420
www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-527-6300 • FAX: 919-334-1265

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

All counties must continue normal operations for application processing, including expedited service, and complete recertifications in compliance with federal and state policies, including application processing timeframes. This guidance does not change eligibility, verification, or reporting requirements.

Expedited Service Applications

Households that apply after the 15th of the month and qualify for expedited service usually receive a combined allotment that includes both the month of application and the following month. Due to the current directive from USDA, expedited service applications received October 16th through October 31, 2025, will receive prorated October 2025 benefits only at this time.

NC FAST will generate a standard notice that references a combined allotment for October and November. County staff must send a manual [DSS-8551: Notice of Eligibility, Denial, or Pending Status notice](#) to inform households that only October 2025 benefits have been issued at this time. Document the case record with the following notation:

A manual [DSS-8551: Notice of Eligibility, Denial, or Pending Status notice](#) was mailed to the household. Only October 2025 benefits have been issued at this time. Transmission of November 2025 benefits is delayed pending USDA guidance.

Normal Application Processing

Applications not eligible for expedited service must continue to be processed under normal application processing timelines. Applications submitted on or before October 31, 2025, and approved through normal processes will be eligible to receive prorated benefits through the month of October 2025, even if the approval of the application happens after October 31, 2025.

More Than A Job and Good Cause for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Work Requirements

The More Than A Job program (formerly Employment & Training) is temporarily suspended due to the federal shutdown. FNS recipients who were meeting ABAWD work requirements through participation in this program must be granted good cause. Document the case file with the following notation: "Good cause granted due to the suspension of the work program due to the federal government shutdown." In addition, enter Work Non-Participation evidence with reason "Beyond Control of Member."

Department Messaging

North Carolinians who rely on federal food assistance programs will continue receiving benefits through October. NCDHHS received a letter from the USDA that November benefits may be disrupted if the federal shutdown continues. We are working to get a better understanding of exactly what that disruption will mean for North Carolina.

NCDHHS will continue to provide updates as we receive them from the federal government. If the shutdown continues and USDA directs a contingency plan that cancels, suspends, delays, or reduces November 2025 FNS benefits, NCDHHS will issue additional guidance to County Directors, issue a statewide press release, and will post updates on the Department website and social media channels.

Households can view account details using the free ebtEDGE mobile app or by calling the EBT Customer Service number on the back of the card.

NCDHHS is coordinating across NC State Government, with community partners and the NC Retail Merchants Association to help disseminate accurate information.

County Messaging

Counties should ensure that households who may exhaust their benefits are informed about available community resources that can offer supplemental food assistance.

County staff may communicate the following script to FNS recipients:

NCDHHS received a letter from the federal government that November FNS benefits may be disrupted if the federal shutdown continues. We are working to get a better understanding of exactly what that disruption will mean for North Carolina. It may mean that November FNS benefits may not be issued on your normal schedule for your usual benefit amount.

We understand how important these benefits are. We will share updates as soon as federal guidance is issued. For more information on FNS benefits and impacts from the federal shutdown you may also visit NCDHHS's website at www.ncdhhs.gov/fns.

You can check your balance in the ebtEDGE app or by calling the number on the back of your EBT card.

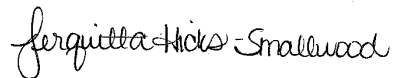
If asked, refer individuals to food resources in your county or the list of resources below.

Community Resources

- [Food Access Maps](#)
- [NC211](#) - Dial 2-1-1 or visit nc211.org to connect with local food pantries, meal programs, and other essential services. Available 24/7 and in multiple languages.

If you have questions, please submit them to Continuous Quality Improvement Support (CQIS): dss.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



Jerquitta Hicks-Smallwood
Assistant Director
Division of Child and Family Well-Being

JHS/vb

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