CHANGE NOTICE FOR MANUAL

DATE: November 9, 2026

MANUAL: Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Certification Manual

TO: County Directors of Social Services

CHANGE NO: #06-2026

SUBJECT: ABAWD Age and Under-14 Exemptions Lost After Screening (FNS 260) and Work Registration After a Non-Reportable Change (FNS 240)

EFFECTIVE: November 1, 2026

I. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this change notice is to announce revisions to the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Policy Manual that clarify how the ABAWD age exemption and the under-14 child exemption are applied when an individual turns age 18, or the youngest child in the household turns age 14, after the individual has been screened for ABAWD exemptions, and when an individual who loses a work registration exemption through a non-reportable change is registered for work.

When an individual loses an exemption from the ABAWD time limit during the certification period, 7 CFR 273.24(k)(1)(i) provides that the State agency cannot begin assigning countable months until it screens the individual to determine whether any other exemption applies. FNS 260.03.D.2.a and FNS 260.06.E.1 place that screening at the next recertification.

NC FAST has been ending the age and under-14 exemptions on the birthday itself, which required the caseworker to screen the member for other exemptions mid-certification. Those screenings were sometimes not completed or not completed correctly, and members were removed from cases or assigned countable months without a screening, which produced Quality Control errors. FNS 260 also did not state how to treat a birthday that falls after the date of application but before the application is approved. This revision provides that the age exemption and the under-14 exemption are determined as of the date of application or, at recertification, the first day of the new certification period, and that an individual who is exempt on the date of application or the first day of the new certification period remains exempt for the remainder of the certification period. The birthday alone requires no caseworker action; the individual is screened for all exemptions at the next recertification. Changes reported by the household during the certification period continue to be handled under FNS 515 and FNS 260.06.E.

FNS 240.01.A.2.b is revised to conform to 7 CFR 273.7(b)(2)(ii), which provides that a person who loses a work registration exemption through a change not subject to the reporting requirements registers for work at the household's next recertification. The prior text directed registration within 10 days of the change. The revision aligns work registration with the ABAWD screening at recertification and with FNS 240.03.B.1, which already applies the next-recertification rule to a child's sixth birthday.

The revision also replaces references to the DSS-8640 in FNS 240 with the DSS-8569 Consolidated Work Notice, which replaced it, changes the 30-day periods for regaining eligibility in FNS 260.05.A to "any 30 consecutive days" to conform to 7 CFR 273.24(d)(1), and makes editorial corrections identified during review. The full-section marked copies show every change.

II. SPECIFIC CHANGES

Section	Description
FNS 240.01.A.2.b	Revised. An individual who loses a work registration exemption because of a change in circumstances that is not subject to the change reporting requirements is registered for work at the FNS unit's next recertification, unless otherwise exempt. The prior instruction to react to the change under FNS 515.01 and register within 10 days is removed. The examples, including a 17-year-old who turns 18, are unchanged.
FNS 240.00.B.2, 240.01 (heading and A), 240.02.A	References to the DSS-8640 Work Registration Responsibilities form are replaced with the DSS-8569 Consolidated Work Notice, which replaced the DSS-8640. The 240.01 heading is now "DSS-8569 Consolidated Work Notice Requirements." No change in when the notice is provided.
FNS 240.03.C	Editorial: "approriate" corrected to "appropriate"; "Department of Employment Services (DES)" corrected to "Division of Employment Security (DES)," the agency's name as used elsewhere in the manual.
FNS 240.03.D	Editorial: "Veteran's Administration" updated to "Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)." The DSS-8209 Medical Report is added as a form that may be used to verify a mental or physical disability. The reference to the DSS-8655 Report of Medical Examination is removed. The DSS-8209 Medical Report is the form that may be used to verify a mental or physical disability for the work registration exemption.
FNS 240.03.I.3	Editorial: "placed in an education or training program by DES" revised to "through E&T."
FNS 240.03.L	The reference to the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program is removed. Verification and questions on the refugee exemption are directed to the State Refugee Office.
FNS 240.03.N	The home school verification reference is a link to the NC Division of Non-Public Education home school page; the outdated web address is removed.
FNS 240.04.A.2	Editorial: "Employment Security Commission (ESC)" updated to "the Division of Employment Security (DES)," with the missing comma added.
FNS 240 (general)	Editorial: "FNS units" corrected to "FNS unit" in 240.00.B.2.
FNS 260.00	Editorial: corrected "36-month periods" to "36-month period."
FNS 260.01.B	New B.2: an individual who is under age 18 on the date of application or, at recertification, on the first day of the new

	certification period is exempt under the age exemption for the remainder of the certification period and remains exempt when the individual turns 18 during the certification period, including an 18th birthday that falls after the date of application but before the application is approved; exemption status is determined again at the next recertification. New B.3: an individual who is age 18 or older on the date of application or the first day of the new certification period is not exempt under the age exemption; the month of the 18th birthday remains an exempt month if the individual was under 18 for any part of it. Editorial: “an another exemption” corrected to “another exemption” in B.1.a.
FNS 260.01.C	New C.6: an individual who resides in a FNS household with a child under age 14 on the date of application or, at recertification, on the first day of the new certification period is exempt under the under-14 exemption for the remainder of the certification period and remains exempt when the youngest child in the household turns 14 during the certification period, including a 14th birthday that falls after the date of application but before the application is approved; exemption status is determined again at the next recertification. New C.7: an individual who does not reside in a FNS household with a child under age 14 on the date of application or the first day of the new certification period is not exempt under the under-14 exemption; the month of the child’s 14th birthday remains an exempt month if the child was under 14 for any part of it. C.1 revised to read “if the individual’s FNS household includes a child under age 14,” replacing “reside in a FNS household with responsibility for a child under age 14,” which conflicted with C.3. No other change to 260.01.C.
FNS 260.01.F.3.c	Editorial: “may, but need to, specify” corrected to “may, but need not, specify” in the medical statement content paragraph.
FNS 260.03.D.2.a	Added that the loss of an exemption during a certification period includes a loss that occurs after the date of application but before the application is approved, and that screening for all other exemptions occurs at the individual’s next recertification.
FNS 260.05.A	“In a 30-day period” changed to “in any 30 consecutive days” in A.1, A.2, and A.3, conforming to 7 CFR 273.24(d)(1).
FNS 260.06.B.3 and D.2	Editorial: “assigned countable month” corrected to “assigned countable months” in B.3 and “assigned countable because” corrected to “assigned countable months because” in D.2.
FNS 260.06.E.1	Added that a change during the certification period includes a change after the date of application but before the application is approved. Editorial: “the individuals is screened” corrected.
FNS 260.08	Editorial: “More Thana Job NC” corrected to “More Than a Job NC.” Counties that wish to implement the ABAWD Services

	Program contact the Food and Nutrition Services Section prior to implementing the program; the coordinator title and telephone number are removed.
FNS 260.09.A	Editorial: “Workforce Investment Act (WIA)” updated to “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).”
Other editorial corrections	FNS 260.00: completed the sentence on the verbal explanation of work requirements (“must also be provided”). FNS 260.00 and 260.04.D.2: “illness of another household” corrected to “illness of another household member.” FNS 260.01.A.1.b: “still require” corrected to “still requires.” FNS 260.01.G.5.b: “If clear information” corrected to “If there is clear information.” FNS 260.02: stray comma removed. FNS 260.04.B.2.a: “80 hours less per month” corrected to “80 hours per month.” FNS 260.04.B.3.f.iii and f.v: “half hours required by of the program” and “An ABAWDs” corrected. FNS 260.04.C table: “a jobs” corrected to “a job.” FNS 260.04.C (Note): “operating in FNS Workfare program” corrected to “operating a FNS Workfare program.” FNS 260.10.B: “the act” capitalized. “NCFAST” corrected to “NC FAST” throughout.

III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

The revised FNS 240 and FNS 260 are effective November 1, 2026 and apply to applications and recertifications processed on or after that date. For your convenience, each revised section is attached in two forms: the final section as it will appear in the manual, and a marked copy showing each change against the current manual.

Key Implementation Points:

- Screen every adult member for all general work registration exemptions and ABAWD exemptions at application and recertification, including members who are exempt based on age or on a child under age 14 in the household (FNS 260.02.A.3).
- A member who is under age 18, or for whom the youngest child in the household is under age 14, on the date of application, or on the first day of the new certification period at recertification, is exempt for the remainder of that certification period. A birthday during the certification period, including a birthday that occurs after the date of application but before the application is approved, does not end the exemption and does not begin countable months. The birthday alone requires no caseworker action and does not delay the disposition.
- A member who is already age 18, or for whom the youngest child in the household is already age 14, on the date of application or on the first day of the new certification period is screened for all other exemptions as with any adult. The month of the birthday remains an exempt month. If no exemption applies, countable months begin with the first full benefit month after the birthday month.
- Screen members whose exemption ended during the prior certification period for all exemptions at the next recertification (FNS 260.06.D.3). Do not retroactively assign countable months for the prior certification period (FNS 260.06.D.2).

- A member who loses a work registration exemption through a change that is not subject to the reporting requirements, including a member who turns 18, is registered for work at the next recertification (FNS 240.01.A.2.b). The DSS-8569 Consolidated Work Notice continues to be provided at application and recertification when a member may become non-exempt during the certification period (FNS 240.01.A.1).
- No review of existing cases is required. Do not take mid-certification action on open cases based on this revision.

NC FAST. NC FAST is being updated, with release on November 8, 2026, so that the age and under-14 exemptions, once applied, remain in place through the certification period. Beginning the month after the birthday month, the Reason column in the Household Members – ABAWD section of the FNS Decision page (Household tab) will display "Retaining ABAWD Exemption for Child Turning 18 Mid Cert Period" for a member who turned 18, or "Retaining ABAWD Eligibility Mid Cert Period" for a member whose youngest child in the household turned 14, and the month will not be a countable month.

Existing cases. When the change is released, NC FAST applies the retained exemption to every member whose birthday is on or after November 1, 2026; no caseworker action is needed. A case that is already on hold for another reason receives the exemption when that hold is released. Households with a member whose birthday is in November 2026 received a DSS-8553 for that birthday before the release. Each of those households will receive a DSS-8562 Effect of Change confirming that benefits continue at their current amount. The Division will notify counties whether NC FAST generates these notices or counties will be asked to send them. No other DSS-8553 will go out for one of these birthdays: NC FAST will cancel the notices already generated for later birthdays before December's notices are sent.

IV. TRAINING FOR ELIGIBILITY WORKERS

ABAWD exemption screening, including the treatment of a birthday during the certification period, will be reviewed at the SNAP Quality Assurance Stand-Up on November 18, 2026. The NC FAST Job Aid FNS – Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) will be updated soon.

If you have any questions, please submit them to the Continuous Quality Improvement Specialist (CQIS) team at dss.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



Brian Patrick Hogan
Deputy Director of Nutrition
Division of Child and Family Well-Being

Attachments (4):

FNS 240 Work Registration (complete revised section, and a marked copy showing each change); FNS 260 Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) (complete revised section, and a marked copy showing each change)