January In-Person Regional Meeting
Question and Answer
January 2024

Work First

1 The keying example for scheduling and completed hours, they entered 12/22 as an authorized holiday. Is this correct? The policy says Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are authorized holidays.

WF Manual Section 118 states that if New Year's Day, July 4th, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day fall on a weekend day, either the Friday before and/or the Monday after the weekend may be substituted for the Holiday. This only applies if the participant was scheduled to participate in the activity and could not because of the holiday.

2 During the participation demonstration, it appears that you can now key Job Search in one calendar with both countable and non-countable keyed together. We found when we do this that NC FAST was exhausting the customer's countable Job Search limit. So are we saying that this functionality has been corrected and we can now key countable and noncountable Job Search in one calendar?

No, case managers should no longer need to enter non-countable Job Search on a separate custom activity. If case managers are encountering issues when entering all Job Search on one activity, please submit a Help Desk ticket.

3 A WF recertification has to be completed face - to - face. But when using a virtual platform, can you still use a telephonic signature for the forms?

Yes, if the WF recertification face - to - face requirement is met utilizing a virtual platform which allows the worker and customer to see each other face - to - face. The telephonic signature may be accepted on the relevant forms. The case details should clearly outline what platform was utilized to meet the face - to - face requirement.

4 WF customers who do not complete enough hours to be included in the numerator of the work participation rate, do we have to key their completed hours.

Yes, all completed hours are expected to be keyed. If the customer doesn't have enough hours to be included in the numerator, the worker must still key them, but it is a best practice to mark them non-countable so they are not subtracted from their annual limit for activities with limits such as Job Search. From a monitoring perspective, we are looking to validate that all completed hours are keyed whether they are countable or noncountable.

5 WF Recertifications must be held face to face via Zoom, Teams, FaceTime, etc. and telephonic signatures are acceptable per WF Section 104 Applications. Does this mean after a recertification is held face to face via Zoom, the recertification case head must come to wet sign the recertification forms or the worker may mail forms to case head due to no telephonic signatures for recertifications?

The case manager should accept a telephonic signature from the client on each form as the case manager has completed the interview with the client. The case details should clearly outline the platform used and telephonic signature was accepted.

Energy

1 Just verifying, the only time counties will record check numbers in NC FAST is when the returned check process is being used, correct?

Correct.

FNS

1 Regarding FNS processing timeliness requirements, we want to approve expedites by the 4th day, but as far as capturing the application being timely or not, it was always more so long as the customer received their benefits by the 7th day for expedite. Now it appears that our timeliness is

going to be based on if it was approved by the 4th or 25th day regardless of whether an EBT was needed or not. Is this correct? The logic doesn't make sense when the customer has an EBT card and they will receive the benefits or eat by the 7th day.

This is the current guidance from USDA. Policy is working on updating the policy to reflect this guidance.

2 Does NC FAST know the difference between a late recertification and a normal application, so the changes in application timeliness is not an issue for late recertifications?

Yes, the system is programmed to know the difference. Counties must monitor the Operations and Maintenance (O & M) reports and submit a help desk ticket for any inaccuracies.

3 For an untimely recertification that is submitted on the 16th of the month and the case head does not have a social security number, they do not receive their benefits until the 21st of the month. Recertification must be processed by the 29th day it would not be timely. If processed by the 15th of the following month and the client doesn't receive the benefits until the 21st (their day in the cycle due to no SSN), then they aren't timely?

Untimely recertifications are not guaranteed uninterrupted benefits. If the customer submits the recertification after the 15th of the month in the last month of the certification period, the benefits must be available by the 30th day from the date the recertification was received. In this circumstance the case would not be considered processed untimely.

4 Please explain the policy on using Work Number as a last resort for FNS when we can pull the wages and finish these cases quickly.

The caseworker can request the Work Number if the employer refuses to provide the information, or the client requests assistance in getting the wages. If the caseworker knows the employer is on the Work Number, the caseworker can ask the client if they need assistance in getting the wages. If the client states that they would like assistance, document this and run the Work Number. If the client states no, request wages on the DSS-8650 and pend for the verification.

5 For applications, if a client is ABAWD and does not require an interview, do they need to be contacted to verbally explain ABAWD/Work Registration or is mailing the DSS-8569 sufficient since they do not require an interview.

No, document the interview was waived and mail the DSS-8569.

6 Please give policy reference on using Work Number as last resort.

Please see the Dear County Director Letter issued February 7, 2019, regarding the Work Number Usage and Screen Changes.

7 Is there a better way to clear submitted documents through EPASS? Most documents come through as duplicates, or without a type, and it takes over an hour to review/clear submitted documents?

Please see the ePASS Document Upload job aid found in FAST Help for guidance.

8 Is the timeliness for 4 and 25 days app processing, is that effective now?

Yes, this requirement has not changed. The processing requirement is the 4th day for expedite and 25th day for regular processing.