

**NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA  
February 14, 2020**

**IM 5380**

**TO:** Human Service Zones  
Policy and System Support  
Economic Assistance Policy Quality Control Reviewers

**FROM:** Michele Gee, Director, Economic Assistance

**SUBJECT:** Applications Maintained in Any County for Economic Assistance Programs

**PROGRAMS:** Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

**EFFECTIVE:** January 1, 2020

**SECTIONS  
AFFECTED:** **448:**  
**Case File Transfers 448-01-40-40**

**CCAP:**  
**Date of Application and Benefit Start Date 400-28-20-10**  
**Moving Within the County 400-28-127-05**  
**Moving to Another County 400-28-127-10**

**LIHEAP:**  
**Applications - Receipt of 415-15-05-25**

**SNAP:**  
**Filing an Application 430-05-20-10**  
**Household Moves to a New County Within the State 430-05-67-30**

**TANF:**  
**Overview 400-19-20-05**

Policy is being updated to reflect that applicants may apply and have their case processed in any county in the state. This is applicable for all Economic Assistance programs.

For CCAP, SNAP and TANF, in an ongoing case if the household moves the case is to be transferred to the new county unless the household indicates they would like their case maintained in a different county. For LIHEAP, ongoing cases will continue to close when the household moves to another county.

Policy changes will be made in the future to reflect the change to Human Service Zones.

448:

#### **Case File Transfers 448-01-40-40**

When a household moves from one county to another, the case file must be transferred to the new county, unless the household indicates they would like their case maintained in a different county, with the exception of LIHEAP. For LIHEAP, the household must reapply in the new county.

Case files must be transferred in a timely manner to allow the receiving county an opportunity to review the case. The sending county must ensure the case file and narrative is up to date and all outstanding issues such as IEVS alerts, overpayments and underpayments are completed.

**NOTE: If the case is not up to date or there are outstanding issues, it is recommended the receiving county work with the sending county to resolve the issues taking into consideration what is in the best interest of the recipient.**

Prior to transferring case files (including all volumes) all unnecessary information must be destroyed. See 448-01-40-45-10 - Case File Destruction for policy on destroying case file documents. Do not include copies of notices or budgets that are available in TECS and Vision that do not include additional documentation.

All actions on the SFN 700 - Case Transfer Log must be completed and included with the case file when transferred. Any special case circumstances must be included on the Case Transfer Log.

Once the case file is ready for transfer, the cases in the eligibility systems must be transferred. A notice of transfer is automatically sent to the household when the case is transferred in Vision. ~~The worker must send the notice of case file transfer to the household when the case is transferred in TECS.~~

County social service offices must maintain an up-to-date log or inventory of incoming and outgoing cases.

Hard copy case files will normally be transferred by certified mail, although a physical transfer may be cost effective in some instances. When sending by certified mail, a receipt stamped with the date of mailing is received. The receipt includes a unique article number used to verify delivery online. The online verification of delivery must be printed, attached to the original receipt and maintained.

When a case transfers from a county with electronic case files to a county who does not have electronic case files, the county who does not have electronic case files must use the information in FileNet up to the date they received the file. From the date they receive the electronic file and forward, the county who does not have electronic case files must create a hard copy file and include only information received from that point forward. Information stored in FileNet must not be printed off and placed in the new hard copy file.

**Note: Requests for access to FileNet must be submitted to the Information Technology Services Unit of the Department.**

For specific program policies on case file transfers, see program policies:

- SNAP 430-05-67-30, Household Moves to a New County Within the State
- TANF 400-19-75-40-25, JOBS or Tribal New Participant Moves to Another County
- CCAP 400-28-127-10, Moving to Another County
- LIHEAP 415-40-30, Transferring a Case to a Different County and 415-15-05-30-10 – Transferred Cases (Reapplication)

CCAP:

### **Date of Application and Benefit Start Date 400-28-20-10**

Households can apply for the Child Care Assistance Program in person, by mail, fax or electronically using one of the following:

- SFN 598 Child Care Assistance Program Application
- SFN 405 Application for Assistance
- The Electronic Application (OASYS) found on the Department of Human Services Website

An SFN 616 Child Care Request for Payment form is not required at time of application.

Applications may be received, filed and maintained at any county office within the state, based on what is most convenient for the applicant or recipient.

CCAP does not require an interview in order to determine eligibility.

### **Date of Application and Benefit Start Date**

The date of the application is the date the signed application is received in the county social service office.

The county social service office must document on the application the date the application was received in the county social services office.

**Note:** Applications received after business hours, on weekends or holidays are considered received on the next business day.

The application is considered signed as long as the signature is found anywhere on the application, other than in answer to a question.

If an unsigned application is received, the unsigned application must be returned to the applicant for signature. The county must document the

date the signed application is received in the office. This date will become the application date.

Benefits will begin on the first day of the month in which the **signed** application is considered received in the county social service office.

### **Prior Month**

Applicants may request assistance for the month prior to the application month (prior month). Households may request the prior month up to the last day of the month following the month of application. Requests for prior months made after the time of application must be submitted in writing to the county social services office.

#### **Example:**

A household applies for CCAP on April 3rd and is approved on April 15th. The household's benefit start date is April 1st. The household has until May 31st to request the prior month.

If eligible, CCAP will issue a one month certificate and make payment for the prior month.

If a certificate already exists for the requested prior month, a new eligibility determination is not made and payment for that month is based on the previous certificate.

### **Moving Within the County 400-28-127-05**

When the caretaker household moves and the change of address is within the same county, the eligibility worker must update the address in the system. ~~Child Care Assistance Program system. The current certificate Eligibility~~ will remain in effect the same if no mandatory changes were reported that need to be acted on.

### **Date of Application and Benefit Start Date 400-28-20-10**

When the caretaker household has moved to another county, the case file will be transferred to the new county unless the household indicates they would like their case maintained in a different county and the

current certificate eligibility will remain in effect the same if no mandatory changes were reported that need to be acted on.

The caretaker may report to either the receiving or the sending county that they are moving or have moved. The county to whom the caretaker reported the move is responsible to inform the family what is needed to allow assistance to continue based on the family's circumstances.

~~When transferring the case to the new county, the eligibility worker must change the caretaker's address and the fields "Worker ID" and "County" on the Change Master to reflect the information of the receiving county. Transferring the case file to the new county will include use of the SFN 700, "Case Transfer Log" (in 448 manual).~~

Consistent with Service Chapter 448, the eligibility worker from the sending county is responsible to complete any unresolved actions in the individual's case prior to transferring the file to the receiving county.

LIHEAP:

### **Applications - Receipt of 415-15-05-25**

The county social service office shall provide application forms to any individual, agency, fuel vendor, etc., who may wish to distribute and assist a potential applicant in completing the form. ALL applications MUST be received by the county social service board, however, and reviewed for eligibility. NO OTHER agency may make any decision regarding eligibility or the level of benefits.

~~Applications will be taken by the county social service board in the county where the client currently resides.~~

Applications may be received, filed and maintained at any county office within the state, based on what is most convenient for the applicant or recipient.

NOTE: When a household applies for fuel assistance and was eligible in a different county previously (in the early months of the same fuel season), the current county will complete the eligibility process. The eligibility will be based on the cost of heating at the time of the application.

Example: Household lived in Burleigh County from October through December they did not apply for fuel assistance. The household moved to Morton County in January and applied for fuel assistance. The Morton County LIHEAP staff will determine eligibility that includes October through December. The LIHEAP Share percentage will be based on the household's current income.

Face-to-face interviews shall not be required unless factors affecting eligibility cannot be clarified by telephone or mail. Circumstances which may indicate the need for a face-to-face interview include:

1. An applicant has a history of misrepresentation;
2. An applicant has difficulty understanding written communication;
3. The application has discrepancies or complex resource information which cannot be resolved by telephone or mail; and
4. The applicant is a "high risk" for Emergency Assistance and an interview is appropriate for crisis prevention (see [415-50-02-05](#)).

Counties who elect to routinely schedule applications by interview must inform the applicant that the interview can be waived if it will cause undue hardship because of poor health, lack of transportation, age, disability, isolation, or conflicting work schedules. Counties are encouraged to be innovative in providing assistance to applicants who cannot come to the county office. In some cases, if weather conditions are poor and an emergency need for fuel exists, the application might be taken by phone, and if income verifications can be done with collateral contacts, the application could be sent with the fuel vendor when he makes an emergency delivery of fuel so the applicant can sign it.

If alternate methods are not successful in assisting the applicant to complete or understand the application or payment procedures, the county office must arrange a personal contact. This may require a home visit if the applicant cannot come to the office and other arrangements are not practical.

SNAP:

**Filing an Application 430-05-20-10**

Counties must encourage a household to file an application for the program if the household expresses concerns about food insecurity. An application form must be provided to anyone making a request. A household must file an application by submitting the form to the county either in person, through an authorized representative, or by mail. A household may also file an application electronically using the on-line application system. A household has the right to file an application on the same day contact is made at the county during office hours.

Households must be informed that receiving SNAP does not have any bearing on any other program's time limits that may apply to the household.

Applications signed through the use of electronic signature techniques and applications containing handwritten signatures which are then transmitted to the county office via fax or other electronic transmission techniques are acceptable means of filing a SNAP application.

If a household requests by telephone or in writing that an application be mailed, it must be sent to the household on the same day the request is made.

A household must be advised that it does not have to be interviewed before filing an application.

Applications may be received, filed and maintained at any county office within the state, based on what is most convenient for the applicant or recipient.

~~Counties must forward an application filed in the wrong county by the applicant to the correct county the next day by any means that ensures the application arrives at the appropriate county office the day it was forwarded (via fax, e-mail or courier). The household must be informed that its application will not be considered filed and the processing standards must not begin until the appropriate office receives the application.~~

### **Household Moves to a New County Within the State 430-05-67-30**

When the worker has information indicating a household has moved to a new county and verification has not been provided, the worker from the county the household is moving from must send Notice F419— a Request



for Verification notice requesting any verification needed, including residency and new shelter costs. The household has 10 days from the mailing date of the ~~F419-~~ notice to provide the verification.

If the household fails to provide the verifications the worker must send the ~~F401-~~ Notice of Eligibility . If it is prior to advance notice deadline the ~~F401-~~ Notice of Eligibility must be sent and the case will close at the end of the month. If it is after advance notice deadline the ~~F401-~~ Notice of Eligibility cannot be sent until the first working day of the following month. Benefits are authorized using the income from the previous month only. Shelter costs are not allowed.

The case is to be transferred unless the household indicates they would like their case maintained in a different county. Prior to transferring the case the worker must complete the following in order. However, the sending and receiving county must take into consideration what is in the best interest of the household.

1. Change the address.
2. Send the ~~F419-~~ Request for Verification requesting any verification needed, including residency and new shelter costs allowing the household 10 days to provide the verification.
3. Authorize benefits.
4. Work any IEVS for combination cases when verification has been received or case alerts.
5. Complete any outstanding claims.
6. Ensure that any cash payments on claims received by the worker are submitted to Finance.
7. Review the file to ensure the mandatory verifications are included.
8. Update narrative.
9. Send ~~notice F817-~~ Notice to Client of Case File Transfer.
10. Transfer the case in the eligibility TECS system ~~using the CARC screen.~~
11. Complete SFN 700 – Case Transfer Log.

**Example:**

Worker received mail returned with a new forwarding address outside of their county on February 25. The worker sends the ~~F419~~ [Request for Verification](#) requesting residency and new shelter costs on February 26 allowing the household 10 days to provide the information. March benefits remain authorized through. On March 5 the household provides the requested verifications. The new shelter costs are allowed when processing April benefits.

## TANF:

### **Application/Request for Benefits 400-19-20**

#### **Overview 400-19-20-05**

An application is a formal request for benefits that is made on one of the prescribed TANF Program application forms. Individuals requesting benefits through the TANF Program must complete and sign an application. The application must be submitted to the local county social service agency for processing. An unsigned application is not considered an application.

[Applications may be received, filed and maintained at any county office within the state, based on what is most convenient for the applicant or recipient.](#)

Prior to determining eligibility and authorizing benefits, the TANF Eligibility Worker must have a completed and signed application. The application is considered signed if the signature is found anywhere on the application, other than to answer a question.

The application process may include the following steps:

- An individual contacts the county agency.
- County agency staff advises the individual of the right to file an application, explain how and where to apply, and, if necessary, assist the individual with completing the application.
- County agency staff shall provide information on the types of assistance and other community resources available.
- An applicant files an application for assistance.

- The TANF Eligibility Worker conducts a face-to-face interview.

**Exception:** If there is not a break in assistance of one full calendar month, the face-to-face interview is optional.

- The applicant provides verifications.
- The TANF Eligibility Worker determines eligibility and the date eligibility begins.
- The TANF Eligibility Worker notifies the applicant of eligibility or ineligibility.