

NC FAST: Through new technology, improving the way DSS serves communities.

- **Efficient, effective assessment:** Automated tools for DSS workers to quickly assess client needs and determine if they are eligible for public assistance programs.
- **Improved case management:** Tools that allow workers to see case information securely and confidentially, so they can better coordinate services across programs.

What does NC FAST mean for individuals and families here in Buncombe County?

- **“One-Stop” Applications** – A person will give eligibility information just one time, to one worker. Staff can then use this as needed for a variety of public assistance programs, such as Food Assistance and Medicaid.
- **Fast, Fair Determinations** – NC FAST assists DSS staff in comparing an application with up-to-date program requirements. The result is an accurate, consistent determination of eligibility no matter where in North Carolina an applicant lives or applies.

During the start-up phase, we expect a longer face-to-face application process. We estimate that it will take about two months for us to have things running smoothly.

- As with any new technology, it will take our staff longer at first, as they learn all the ins and outs of the new program.
- Currently (before starting NC FAST) our application interview takes about 30 minutes on average. We estimate that when we first start using NC FAST, it may take up to 90 minutes to complete the application.
- Once NC FAST is up and running, we expect quicker turnaround for processing applications and delivering benefits.

We are doing all we can to speed-up this process, and to reduce any inconvenience to you. While you wait, we hope to make your visit as pleasant as possible by providing:

- Greeters in the lobby who can tell you more about DSS support services and Health services, as well as other support services offered in our community.
- Our usual on-site services – like Immunizations – that you might want to use while waiting.
- Brochures and informational material.
- Free WI-FI for those who have laptops or other WI-FI devices.

You don’t have to wait longer for a face-to-face interview. We have other options for applying:

- Anyone may go **online** and complete an application for Food and Nutrition Services at www.ePASS.nc.gov. On this website you fill out, print, and then sign the application. Once the application is signed, you can fax or mail to us, or drop-off at our Coxe Avenue office.
- You may also complete an application **over the phone (828-250-5500)**. A caseworker will take the your information, and then mail the forms to sign. The package sent in the mail includes a list of the additional information needed to complete the application.
- If you aren’t able to wait, you can ask for an appointment and come back at another time.

Anyone with questions regarding Food and Nutrition Services is encouraged to contact our Buncombe County office at 250-5500.

