

**SAMPSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
CLINTON, NORTH CAROLINA 28328**

360 COUNTY COMPLEX RD
SUITE 100

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SAMPSON COUNTY DSS CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) INFORMATION

****Last updated Wednesday, August 11, 2021***

Due to COVID-19, DSS has modified operations. As circumstances evolve, continual adjustments will be made and shared.

General Operations:

- The Agency is open with modified public services as listed below.
- The front entrance to Health and Human Services is closed, back entry only.
- To limit exposure and protect everyone, visitors are asked to practice the three Ws: wear a mask, wait six feet apart, and wash hands & use hand sanitizer.
- Hand sanitizing stations are positioned throughout the building and surfaces are frequently cleaned & disinfected throughout the day.
- All Agency Staff self-screen daily.
- Almost all DSS services can be handled without visiting the Agency.
- Switchboard operations have been expanded to improve customer service and a telephone call to **910-592-7131** may satisfy your questions or concerns.

Service Information/Program Modifications are as follows:

- To apply for Food Assistance (FNS) or Medicaid (including Long Term Care):
 - Go online through ePASS (epass.nc.gov)
 - Mail/Drop Off/Fax (910-592-4297) a paper application
 - Call for service by phone or visit the Agency
- To apply for Subsidized Child Care Assistance:
 - Call for service by phone or visit the Agency
- To apply for Work First:
 - Go online through ePASS (epass.nc.gov) to view & print WFFA application
 - Mail/Drop Off/Fax (910-592-4297) a paper application
 - Call for service by phone or visit the Agency
- To apply for CIP (Crisis Intervention Program):
 - Go online through ePASS (epass.nc.gov)
 - Mail/Drop Off/Fax (910-592-4297) a paper application
 - Call for service by phone or visit the Agency
 - A disconnect notice is no longer needed for CIP – only a past due or final notice is required.
- To apply for Child Support:
 - Go online at ncchildsupport.com
 - Call for service by phone or visit the Agency

Other Information:

- **Food & Nutrition:**
 - ✓ NC FNS recipients have the ability to purchase groceries online using their EBT cards at authorized online EBT retailers. Authorized online EBT retailers are Publix, Amazon, Wal-Mart, Charlie C's, Food Lion, BJ's and Aldi.
 - ✓ Interviews will be waived on all applications/recertification on or after April 1, 2020 until December 31, 2021.

- ✓ Effective March 25, 2020 Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDS) are exempt until Covid19 health emergency declaration ends.
 - ✓ Approval of telephonic signatures on application/recertification extended thru December 31, 2021.
 - ✓ 15 % increase in monthly SNAP benefits has been extended until September 30, 2021.
 - ✓ Student of higher education work requirement are exempt until 30 days after the Federal Public Health Emergency is lifted (must meet the following conditions: 1)eligible for a Work Study Program during the regular school year and 2) has an expected family contribution of \$0 as determined by the financial aid office).
 - ✓ Effective March 25, 2021 at home testing COVID-19 kits are available for underprivileged/disabled North Carolinians experiencing financial barriers to get tested. They can call 800-833-3935 or visit www.pixel.labcorp.com/NorthCarolina
 - ✓ Effective April 27, 2021 the minimum supplement to take household to maximum allotment for their household size is \$95.00. If the difference between allotment and maximum amount is less than \$95.00, the state will issue \$95.00. (This waiver is reviewed on a monthly basis by the state).
 - ✓ Suspension of H or I controlled substance Assessment has been extended thru August 31, 2021 (this waiver is reviewed on a monthly basis by the state).
 - ✓ Effective May 12, 2021 WFFA, Energy and FNS recipients are being offered assistance with Emergency Broadband benefits they can visit <https://getemergencybroadband.org> to apply.
- **Medicaid:** NC DHHS Division of Health Benefits (DHB) is implementing an optional COVID-19 Testing Eligibility group as a new coverage program for uninsured individuals as allowed under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. This eligibility group will be designated as Medicaid for Coronavirus (MCV). The MCV program will begin September 1, 2020 and will end the date the Public Health Emergency ends. This a limited service benefit that provides only COVID-19 testing. In order to be eligible for the MCV program, applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:
- Lives in North Carolina
 - Be a U.S. Citizen, U.S. National or have eligible immigration status, and
 - Not be covered by Medicaid, Medicare, or other health insurance.
- ✓ Testing for COVID-19 has been added to Family Planning Medicaid effective September 1, 2020.
 - ✓ Medicaid cannot be terminated during the Public Health Emergency. Medicaid can only be terminated for the following reasons:
 - The individual moves out of state, or the beneficiary voluntarily requests termination of Medicaid benefits.
 - Death
 - 19 or 20 year olds receiving North Carolina Health Choice (NCHC) and ineligible for any other programs (upon review).
 - NC Health Choice fees have been temporarily waived.
- **Child Care:** Subsidized childcare recipient parent fees have been waived through October 31, 2021.
- ✓ A childcare hotline (1-888-600-1685) has been set up for families to call to get information about local options for infants through children age 12. The hotline is open Monday through Friday 8 am to 5pm.
 - ✓ Division of Child Development and Early Education issued a temporary 20-day grace period for clients who submit a late childcare recertification packet. The grace period will end on December 31, 2021.

- **Crisis Intervention Program:** Governor's Executive Order on utility moratoriums has ended; many utility providers are offering customer payment agreements. If households apply for CIP, policy guidelines are still followed.
 - ✓ If the household or vendor can verify the household has entered into a payment agreement, this serves as verification that the customer has a past due or final notice, even though the household may or may not be meeting the payment agreement. The county will verify the terms of the agreement and the amount needed to prevent disconnection of service.
 - ✓ Applications are available in the agency, can be mailed by request or can be accessed online on epass.nc.gov.
 - ✓ Applicants applying by phone, a telephonic signature will be allowed. A telephonic signature is a type of electronic signature that uses an individual's verbal attestation in place of an ink signature. This change was effective August 25, 2020.
 - ✓ **Duke Energy Winter Disconnection Moratorium:** This new program, Duke Energy Carolinas Customer Connect, will target households that not only are experiencing financial hardships, but have a household member who is disabled or elderly. This will remove the threat of disconnection of service for non-payment, and will grant Duke Energy Carolinas, Duke Energy Progress, and Piedmont Natural Gas customers a 12 month payment arrangement on an opt-out basis for their outstanding balances prior to their April 2021 bill. This will allow additional time for customers to access financial assistance and allow customers to setup manageable payments for remaining balances at the end of the winter heating season.
- **Adult, Children and Family Services**
 - ✓ Child or adult abuse and neglect reports should continue and will be handled 24/7. Call the Agency during the weekday at **910-592-4200 or 910-592-7131**; call EM Communications at **910-592-1151 or 911** anytime.
 - ✓ General adult service needs are continuing as normal within the Agency.
 - ✓ COVID-19 Support for Youth & Young Adults Transitioning from Foster Care: young adults ages 18-21 who exited the Foster Care 18 to 21 program during the pandemic due to their age have the opportunity to re-enter the program. This applies to young adults 21 and older who left the program during the COVID-19 pandemic health emergency from Jan. 27, 2020-April 20, 2021. Young adults are allowed re-entry and access to services under this federal requirement until Sept. 30, 2021. Some of the services and supports provided include funding to assist with the following expenses: transportation, rent, supplement income; food and other basic household needs.
For more information contact your local DSS; the State LINKS Program Coordinator, Erin Conner at erin.conner@dhhs.nc.gov or (919) 801-0369; or the Foster Care 18 to 21 Program Coordinator LeAnn McKoy at leann.mckoy@dhhs.nc.gov or (919) 527-6375.
- Medicaid Transportation Services remain available by phone, call to the Agency (910) 592-7131.
- An internal drop box is in the main DSS lobby & an external drop box is at the back entrance (for any program).
- Payments can be made via the mail or within the office.
- Court operations for Child Support and Child/Adult Services have resumed with a few safety precautions and limitations in place.

If you visit our Agency, our Customer Service Center (The HUB) remains open in the main lobby. Services include:

- Computer/Internet access (personal use for online services – file for unemployment, etc.)
- Various community resources are provided – food bank operations, housing options, other county services, etc.
- A lobby phone is available for use as needed.