Introducing new technological tools and business processes to improve how DHHS and county departments of social services deliver services and benefits to North Carolina families in need.
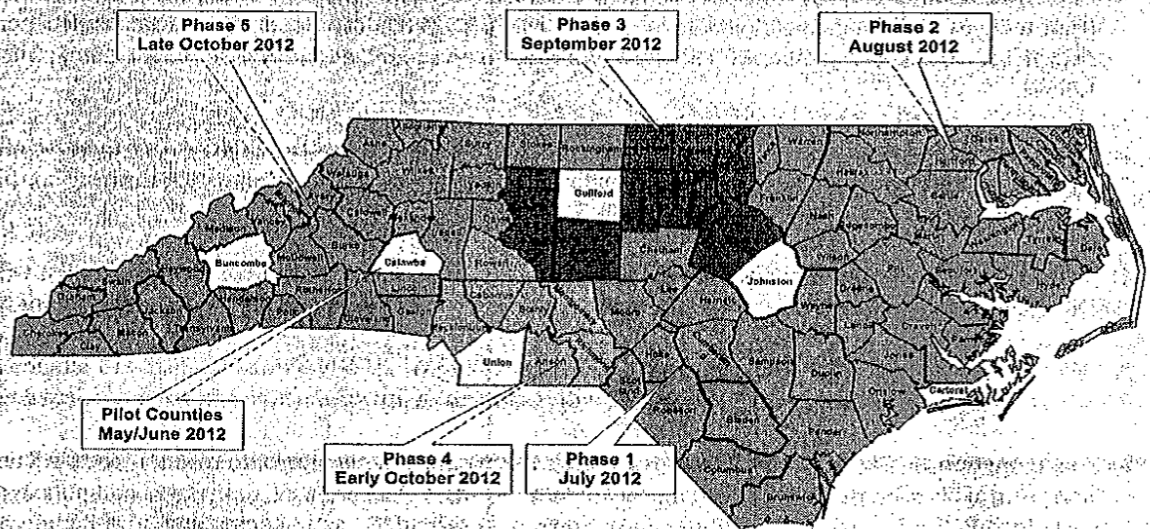
What is the NC FAST implementation approach?

The NC FAST implementation approach consists of a Pilot Implementation and five subsequent implementation phases. The Pilot counties are broken into two groups. The primary Pilot counties (Guilford, Catawba, Carteret and Johnston) will go-live on NC FAST in May 2012. The back-up Pilot counties (Buncombe and Union) will go-live approximately one month after the primary Pilot counties implement NC FAST.

Following Pilot county implementation, the five additional implementation phases will begin in July 2012, starting with counties located in the southeast portion of the state. Each phase of the implementation is restricted to counties within a certain geographic area. In general, implementation phases will move from east to west across North Carolina until all five phases are completed in October 2012.
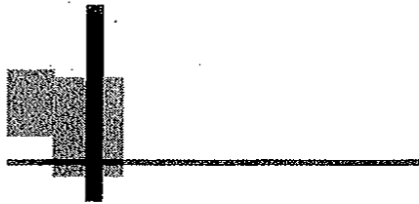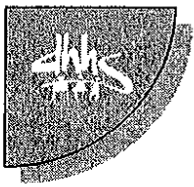
The geographic implementation approach is beneficial in a number of ways. First, it will minimize the required travel for both NC FAST trainers and county staff. The grouping of counties creates a more uniform population of users who will be going live on NC FAST during each phase. This corresponds to a more uniform number of users who will require training during each phase. Additionally, grouping the counties in this fashion creates a similar caseload that will be added to NC FAST during each phase. As each successive phase is implemented, this structure allows for lessons learned from previous phases to be incorporated into the preparation for subsequent phases. Lastly, the phased approach will allow for better coordination among counties who have already gone live, and those who will be going live next.

The map below highlights each county and the phases of the NC FAST implementation.

Phase 5 Late October 2012	**Phase 3** September 2012	**Phase 2** August 2012
Pilot Counties May/June 2012	**Phase 4** Early October 2012	**Phase 1** July 2012

The implementation plan allows for two Pilot phases. Completing two Pilot phases provides the NC FAST team with time to address any issues that may arise during the Pilot phases before a new set of counties goes live.

Revised 1/13/2012

As we move closer to go-live, please stay tuned for more information on NC FAST!

Top 10 NC FAST Changes Affecting All Staff

10. Less paperwork – During face-to-face interviews, case managers no longer complete paper-based application forms. Client information currently collected on those forms is entered directly into NC FAST. NC FAST eliminates the need to complete the DSS-8207 Form, and others used to receive and process an application for food assistance benefits.

9. No manual intake report log – NC FAST automatically assigns the case number to a new case once a person indicates the desire to apply for food assistance, and the case information is entered in NC FAST. NC FAST also captures the time the case manager receives the application, response time for case action, the name of the case manager assigned the case, and then generates the necessary notice and information needed to complete application processing.

8. Easy navigation from one task or section to another in NC FAST – There are home-page pods, navigational tabs and shortcuts that help streamline movement through and organize information in NC FAST. Case managers will also be able to have multiple cases open simultaneously, and tab between cases without having to refresh the screen after each case action.

7. Improved system access – System availability with NC FAST will be improved to 24/7 with minimal downtime for system maintenance during non-traditional work hours. The improved system availability will provide greater flexibility to meet the needs of the State's most vulnerable families.

6. Legacy system (FSIS) will be turned off – FSIS will no longer be available for data entry or inquiry after each county's implementation of NC FAST. Converted data from FSIS to NC FAST will be limited to open cases and cases closed within the prior two years of the conversion date. A closed case in FSIS that is older than two years at data conversion will not be brought over to NC FAST as a shell case. This case will need to be entered as a new case if the client applies for FNS benefits in the future.

5. Clients gain online access – The ePASS functionality will be deployed after NC FAST to allow clients to apply for benefits online, and have this data automatically feed into NC FAST, eliminating the need for physical visits to a local agency.
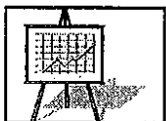
4 "To Do" lists will help manage case related tasks – The NC FAST Case Management System will provide "To Do" lists that will include Alerts and Tasks that require the case manager's or supervisor's attention.

3. Workloads will be centrally organized – NC FAST will include a workload tab that will include a list of assigned cases that are assigned to case managers. Each worker will be able to easily view active and newly assigned cases from this tab.
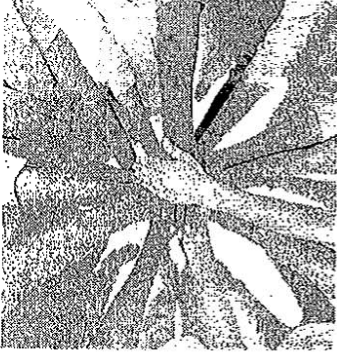
2. Local agencies will see streamlined processes – Supervisor functionality as a result of NC FAST implementation will be improved with support for workload management tools like calendars, with daily tasks and notices of actions due. Benefits will include improved case documentation, work flows and user guides, and linked access to rules and policies.

1. Increased worker productivity – The NC FAST Case Management System is a knowledge-based system with eligibility policy and rules embedded in the software. Eligibility determination is no longer dependent solely on worker knowledge. The interview process uses intelligent scripting, which includes or excludes questions based on claimant response to the previous question.

REMEMBER: *"What you do today can improve all your tomorrows."*—Ralph Marston

Revised 1/13/2012

As we move closer to go-live, please stay tuned for more information on NC FAST!

For more information, please visit the NC FAST website at http://www.ncdhhs.gov/ncfast/

Top 10 Frequently Asked Questions...

5. Once NC FAST is fully implemented, will basic client and/or office visitor information be captured and stored in NC FAST and made available to agency staff?

Answer: Yes. NC FAST Case Management functionality will provide for a global reception process, which will include client/visitor registration and the collection of demographic information and workflow routing for the interview. Information provided at the front desk and during the intake interview will be captured and stored in the Case Management functionality and made available to agency workers across programs that have the need to know.

4. What implications will NC FAST implementation have on current reports and Data Warehouse information being generated for county use?

Answer: The goal is to populate the Data Warehouse with data that comes from NC FAST just as FSIS has done. The frequency of the updates is being defined, but the anticipation is that they will occur on a nightly basis, at a minimum.

3. Will NC FAST determine eligibility by applying policy for cases that are converted from FSIS to the new Case Management System?

Answer: Cases will be frozen in FSIS and converted assuming the benefit amount at the time of conversion is correct. The NC FAST Case Management System will not perform any eligibility determination tests on converted cases. The benefit amounts will continue at the converted level until the end of the certification period or until an actionable change event occurs.

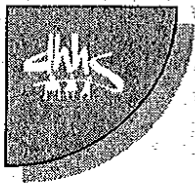**2. As designed, is NC FAST a knowledge-based system with rules and policy embedded in the software?**

Answer: Yes. NC FAST is a rule-based system. Eligibility policy and rules are embedded in the software and no longer dependent on worker knowledge. The interview process will use intelligent scripting, which includes or excludes questions based on client response to the previous questions.

1. Case managers often receive phone calls or in-person inquiries as to why benefits have decreased or have been terminated. Will NC FAST provide a breakdown of why a client may receive a reduced or terminated benefit amount?

Answer: The NC FAST Case Management System will enable users to examine policy corresponding to the reason an application is ineligible (or a reduction in benefits) through a linked display to the policy/rules applied in the case. The NC FAST application will have pages that indicate which Program/Policy rules have passed/failed to help address these types of questions from clients.
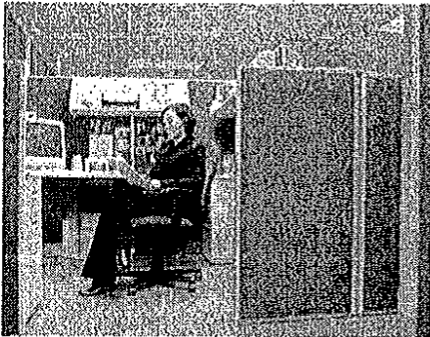
As we move closer to go-live, please stay tuned for more information on NC FAST!

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Top 10 Frequently Asked Questions

10. Since NC FAST will be a web-based Case Management system, are there specific recommendations for counties around the issue of bandwidth for internet connectivity?

Answer: The NC FAST minimum PC requirements and PC recommendations are published in NC FAST Dear County Director Letter (DCDL) #11-0026, dated September 16, 2011. The DCDL is available on the NC FAST website: http://www.ncdhhs.gov/ncfast/countyreadiness/crDCDL.htm, and also at: http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/dcdl/index.htm. At the bottom of the page, click the link for "NCFAST" under Links to other division DCDLs. A minimum bandwidth recommendation can be derived using the following formula: # peak concurrent users divided by 45 times 18 (divided again by 2 for compressed browsers) = KB per second per user.

9. On "go-live" day for pilot counties and general county rollout, will FSIS continue to operate or will it get turned off?

Answer: FSIS will no longer be available for data entry or inquiry following each county's rollout and implementation of NC FAST. The current direction is that converted data from FSIS to NC FAST will be limited to open and pending cases and cases closed within the two years prior to the conversion date. Access to older FSIS case information not included in the conversion will continue to be available following implementation through the Data Warehouse and NCXPTR reports. An information bridge will be available to NC FAST users providing a statewide view and access to basic FSIS case information.

8. Will data that is currently stored in county case management systems be converted to NC FAST?

Answer: No. Data and forms from county in-house (local) case management systems will not be converted and maintained in NC FAST.

7. If a client in a closed case that is older than the 2-year conversion period inquires about food assistance after conversion, is he or she considered a new applicant for food assistance?

Answer: Yes. Since cases closed in FSIS two years prior to NC FAST conversion will not be brought over to NC FAST, they must be entered as new cases if clients apply for FNS benefits after the conversion date.

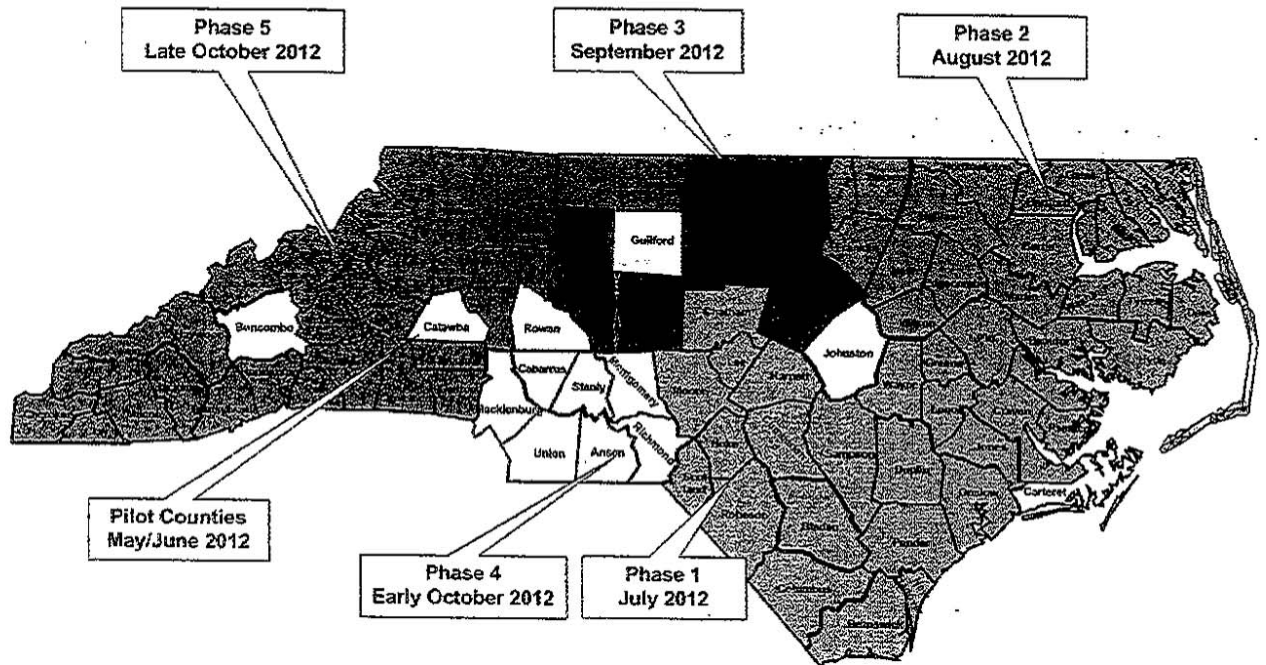6. When will ePASS connect to the NC FAST Case Management System?

Answer: After counties implement NC FAST, functionality in ePASS will also be deployed to allow clients to apply for benefits online using ePASS and have this data this automatically feed into NC FAST.

NC FAST
Coming Soon to a County Near You!

NC FAST will begin rolling out to Pilot counties in **May 2012**. Soon after the Pilot counties are up and running, additional counties will start implementing the NC FAST system in phases. The map below shows the different implementation phases and go-live dates for NC FAST Project 1, Global Case Management and Food and Nutrition Services (FNS). Full implementation of NC FAST Project 1 in all 100 counties will be completed by **October 2012**.

Phase 5
Late October 2012

Phase 3
September 2012

Phase 2
August 2012

Pilot Counties
May/June 2012

Phase 4
Early October 2012

Phase 1
July 2012

How are we going to prepare?

- Each county has dedicated a number of individuals to serve as County Champions and Technical Champions to help prepare county staff for the implementation. They are addressing items such as data conversion, staff training, communications and office infrastructure.

- The NC FAST Program Team has dedicated County Readiness Liaisons who will be working closely with each county to help them prepare.

- Newsletters, topic spotlights and extensive training will all be provided to staff to inform them of upcoming changes and increase awareness of NC FAST.

- NC FAST will be visiting the counties and communicating anticipated changes through "road show" briefings with county staff.

For more information about NC FAST, please visit the website at http://www.ncdhhs.gov/ncfast

NC FAST
North Carolina Families Accessing
Services through Technology

Project 1:
Global Case
Management
and FNS

Information
Brochure

NC FAST in a Nutshell

What is NC FAST?

- North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST) is a program designed to improve the way the Department of Health and Human Services and county departments of social services provide services and benefits to the people of North Carolina.
- NC FAST introduces new technological tools and business processes that will enable workers to spend less time on administrative tasks and more time addressing the needs of families.
- NC FAST takes advantage of industry leading case management software known as Cúram to streamline the application, eligibility determination and benefit issuance processes.
- The main goal of NC FAST is to provide better benefit program access and services to the people of North Carolina.

Why implement NC FAST?

- County caseworkers currently spend a large portion of their time completing paperwork and filing case documentation. NC FAST will reduce paperwork and streamline data gathering – allowing caseworkers to provide better support to the clients.
- NC FAST will create a uniform case management system across all 100 counties in North Carolina. This allows information to be shared and transferred among counties, helping not only county DSS staff, but all program participants as well.
- NC FAST will help caseworkers to administer various program benefits and services, allowing them to focus on excellent case management practices.
- Clients will receive benefits in a more timely manner, due to reduced application and processing time.
- A standardized system creates the ability to implement policy changes efficiently and uniformly.

Common Questions About NC FAST

When **NC FAST** held an initial meeting with each Pilot County, the county staff raised a number of questions regarding the implementation and the NC FAST system. Pictured below are Kelly Grizzard, Diane Poe and Kimberly LeBlanc of Guilford County. A sampling of the questions asked follows.

Will county staff be able to call up information on cases as needed using NC FAST? Yes, staff will have access to all the needed case information through NC FAST.

When the county goes live on NC FAST what will happen to FSIS? When a county goes live, all new case information will be entered in NC FAST. FSIS will no longer be active for the county, although county users may access certain historic data in FSIS using a data bridge in NC FAST.

How much data will be converted into NC FAST from FSIS? All active and pending case data, as well as a 2 year history of closed cases will be converted from FSIS into NC FAST. Any record older than 2 years will not be converted.

Will NC FAST include the program policies and calculate benefit amounts automatically? Yes. NC FAST is a rule-based system that will contain the eligibility rules for each program. The system will automatically calculate the benefit amount a client may receive based on the information entered by a caseworker.

Benefits & Changes

Key Benefits:

- **Less Paperwork** – You will no longer complete certain paper-based forms, such as the DSS-8207. All client information currently collected on this form will be entered directly into NC FAST.
- **Local agencies will streamline processes** – Supervisor functionalities as a result of NC FAST implementation will be improved with support for workload management tools like calendars with daily tasks and notices of actions due.
- **Efficiency** – NC FAST will provide improved case documentation, work flows and user guides, and linked access to rules and policies.
- **Clients gain online access** – The ePASS functionality will be deployed in late 2012 to allow clients to apply for benefits online. The electronic data will automatically feed into NC FAST and route to the appropriate caseworker.

Key Changes:

- **No Manual Intake Report Log** – The Cúram software being deployed as part of NC FAST includes a reception function. It also captures the time the case manager receives the application, response time for case action, and generates the necessary notice and information needed to complete the application processing.
- **Workloads will be centrally organized** – NC FAST will include a workload tab that will include a list of assigned cases assigned to case managers. Each worker will be able to easily view active and newly assigned cases from this tab.
- **Improved System Access** – NC FAST will be operational nearly 24/7 with minimal downtime for system maintenance during non-traditional work hours. This provides greater flexibility to meet the needs of the state's most vulnerable families.