

## **Rights and Responsibilities – Prior to Interview**

**Please listen carefully to the following information about your Rights and Responsibilities and penalties for giving false information for benefits. After hearing these Rights and Responsibilities you will be transferred to a caseworker for your interview.**

When you receive benefits from the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), you have certain rights and responsibilities.

### **Your Rights**

- You cannot be discriminated against based on your race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The nondiscrimination statement is attached to your application. If you are applying over the phone, a copy of your application will be mailed to you.

You may file a civil rights complaint with DCFS and USDA or only DCFS.

You have the right to file a program complaint by emailing [LaHelpU.DCFS@LA.GOV](mailto:LaHelpU.DCFS@LA.GOV) or by calling 225-342-2342.

- Fair Hearing - If you do not agree with the decision made on your case, you have the right to ask that your case be reviewed. You can request a fair hearing in writing, in person or by calling the office. You have a right to look at your case information before the hearing.
- All information you give is confidential. We cannot give information about your case to other people except under special conditions such as law enforcement officials trying to catch person fleeing the law or probation and parole.
- An eligibility decision will be made within 30 days from the date of your application and you will receive a letter notifying you of that decision. Receipt of an EBT card does not mean you have been determined eligible.
- If you are determined eligible, your benefits will be placed on an EBT card which can be used at most grocery stores. The EBT card will be automatically mailed to you. You will need to call the number printed on the back of the EBT card to activate the card and select a PIN. The PIN must be used each time the EBT card is used.
- If you are determined eligible for SNAP, all children under the age of 19 may be eligible for Medicaid if you choose the option for your household to be referred to Medicaid.
- If you receive SNAP benefits, your household will be placed in Simplified Reporting (SR). SR is a method for SNAP households to report certain changes in income and circumstances at the midpoint of the certification period.
- If you are applying for FITAP or KCSP benefits, the time limit that applies to those programs do not apply to the receipt of SNAP benefits. Households who no longer receive FITAP or KCSP due to reaching the time limit, began working, or for other reasons may still qualify for SNAP benefits.
- Your household may be authorized to receive non-cash TANF/MOE funded services. A copy of non-cash TANF/MOE funded services will be mailed to you if your case is certified.

### **Your responsibilities**

- Cooperation - You have to cooperate by providing the information we need to determine your eligibility for benefits for you and others for whom you are applying. You also have to provide proof of the

information you report. You will be expected to cooperate if a home visit is necessary to determine your eligibility. If your case is selected for a quality control review by state or federal reviewers, you have to cooperate with them. Information you give us on your application will be verified by federal, state, and local offices including computer cross-matching with other agencies. Someone from our agency may contact other people in order to verify your eligibility for benefits and services. The immigration status of household members may be subject to verification through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and may affect eligibility and benefit amount. The collection of information including Social Security Numbers of household members is voluntary. Failure to provide required information including Social Security Numbers or proof that you have applied for a Social Security Number for household members may result in that person's ineligibility for benefits.

- Social Security Numbers are used to collect information from other sources, check identity of household members, determine whether your household is eligible, and prevent households from getting more benefits than they are entitled to received.

- If you or a member of your household is a Mandatory Work Registrant (MWR) you must comply with the following work requirements. Your worker will discuss this during your interview if this applies to your household.
- Register for work with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) by registering for a Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE) account. The deadline to register for work is:
  - 3:00 pm on the 7<sup>th</sup> day for expedited service,
  - 3:00 pm on the 30<sup>th</sup> day from the application date for applications, and
  - 3:00 pm on the last workday of the redetermination month.

The HiRE account must be active at application and redetermination to be considered registered for work.

- You must not voluntarily quit your job or reduce your work effort to less than 30 hours per week.
- You must accept a job offer that pays at least the minimum wage,
- You must report to an employer when referred,
- You must respond to requests from the Department of Children and Family Services for information regarding employment status or availability for work, and
- If you are an Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD), you must meet the ABAWD work requirement unless exempt.
  - An ABAWD is an individual who is:
    - Physically or mentally fit for employment,
    - Age 18 (beginning the month after their eighteen birthday) through 49, (ending the month prior to their fiftieth birthday),
    - Not pregnant, and
    - Not living in a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) household with a child who is under age 18, even if the child is not eligible to receive SNAP benefits.
- If you refuse or fail without good cause to comply with the above work requirements, voluntarily quit your job, or reduce your work effort to less than 30 hours per week, you cannot get SNAP benefits for 1 month for the first violation, 3 months for the second violation, and 6 months for subsequent violations. You can participate in SNAP after the end of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>-month sanction period if you have complied with the requirement you violated and are determined eligible
- If you receive SNAP, you can volunteer to participate in the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Program. The SNAP E&T program is a free program that helps SNAP recipients gain skills, training, work or experience to get a job or get a better job.

- If you participate with the Employment and Training Program, you can receive participant reimbursements such as transportation, child care, and supportive services, such as clothing, uniforms, equipment, books, supplies, and tools.
  - It does not affect your SNAP benefits if you stop participating or choose not to participate with the SNAP E&T Program.
  - For more information on the SNAP E&T Program, visit the DCFS website at [www.dcfslouisiana.gov/page/snap-et](http://www.dcfslouisiana.gov/page/snap-et).
- Report changes – If you receive SNAP benefits, you must report if:
    - Your household's monthly income increases to more than 130% of the federal poverty limit for your household size. This amount will be included on the notice of decision. This includes reporting the income of a person who moves into your home if that person's income combined with your SNAP household's income is more than 130% of the federal poverty limit for your household.
    - Your household receives lottery or gambling winnings of \$3750 or more, won in a single game before taxes or other withholdings.

These changes must be reported by the 10th of the month following the month in which the change occurs.

In addition, if you are receiving:

- FITAP - You have to:
  - Follow the reporting requirements explained in your Family Success Agreement and report these changes within 10 days of your knowledge of the change.
  - Report within 10 days if the only eligible child receiving FITAP benefits moves out of your home.
- KCSP - You have to report within 10 days if the only eligible child receiving KCSP benefits moves out of your home.

If you are **not** receiving SNAP benefits, **and are** receiving:

- FITAP or KCSP - You have to report within 10 days if:
  - There is a change in the source of any income received in your household. This includes changes in employers and new sources of income such as child support, Social Security, SSI, etc.
  - The amount of your household's unearned income changes by more than \$100 per month.
  - The amount of your household's earned income changes by more than \$100 per month.
  - Someone moves into or out of your household.
  - You move.
- FITAP or KCSP - In addition to the changes listed above, you have to report within 10 days any changes in:
  - School attendance of any 18-year-old in your household.
  - Marital status of anyone in your household.

- Information you give us on your application will be computer verified against other federal and state agencies, including Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC).
- If you knowingly report incorrect information, your case may be referred to the Fraud and Recovery Unit and your benefits may be denied, reduced, or ended for at least one year and you may be subject to criminal prosecution.
- If you or a member of your household have been convicted of a crime after February 7, 2014, for certain felonies and are not in compliance with the terms of the sentence, you will not be eligible for SNAP benefits. By signing the application, you certify that the information you give regarding the felony conviction of certain crimes is correct.

- You may not purchase alcohol or tobacco products with SNAP benefits. if you do, you will lose SNAP benefits for one year for the first violation.
- If you trade, buy, or sell SNAP benefits of \$500 or more, you will lose SNAP benefits permanently.
- You must cooperate with Quality Control (QC) if your household is selected for a quality control review by state or federal reviewers.

## **PENALTIES**

If you knowingly report incorrect information, your SNAP, FITAP, or KCSP benefits may be denied, reduced, or ended and you may be subject to criminal prosecution.

**Penalties for SNAP** - If you hide information or give false information, trade or sell SNAP benefits or EBT cards, use SNAP benefits to buy ineligible items, or use someone else's benefits, you will lose your SNAP benefits for 1 year for the first violation, 2 years for the second violation, and permanently for the third violation. You may also be fined up to \$250,000 or imprisoned for up to 20 years or both.

A list of all the penalties is attached to your application.