

# DCFS Community Partner Manual



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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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CHAPTER	PAGE
1. Introduction	2
2. Program Description	3
3. Partner Levels and Responsibilities	5
4. Programs/Services Directory	9
5. The Application Process	12
6. Required Verification (SNAP, FITAP, KCSP)	13
7. Confidentiality	14
8. Computer Security Policy and Guidelines	17
9. Community Partner Oversight	18
10. Nondiscrimination Policy	19
11. Questions and Answers Regarding the Application Process	23
Appendix A. Executive Bulletin E-2414-00 Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Language Line	29

\* See Community Partner Training Slideshow for instructions on the CAFÉ (Client Access Front End) Online Portal

## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

*Thank you for becoming a community partner with DCFS!*

Your partnership helps us provide more effective and efficient services to the citizens of Louisiana. We recognize that strengthening families to build a stronger Louisiana depends on the coordinated effort of the agency and its community partners.



### **DCFS Mission Statement:**

“Working to keep children safe,  
helping individuals and families become self-sufficient,  
and providing safe refuge during disasters.”

DCFS Vision:  
Safe and Thriving Families and Individuals.

***Our goals could not be accomplished without the collaboration of community partners.***

As a community partner, you will provide clients information and the ability to apply for DCFS programs such as:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps
- Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP)
- Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP)
- Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (DSNAP)
- Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Program

We hope this partnership will complement your organization's mission in providing resources and assistance for fellow residents, families and individuals in your community.

As a community partner, you will have opportunities to:

- Expand your client base,
- Network with other agencies and
- Increase your visibility and overall mission in the community you serve.

## **Chapter 2 – Program Description**

### **A. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

SNAP provides monthly benefits that help eligible low-income households buy the food they need for good health. For most households, SNAP funds account for only a portion of their food budgets; they must also use their own funds to buy enough food to last throughout the month. Eligible households can receive food assistance through regular SNAP or through the [Louisiana Combined Application Project \(LaCAP\)](#).

LaCAP is a food assistance program for Louisiana residents who are at least 60 years of age and receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). It is a simplified version of SNAP. A client may be eligible for LaCAP if they are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and:

- Are age 60 or older,
- Are not institutionalized or otherwise ineligible for SNAP benefits due to immigration status, an Intentional Program Violation, or drug conviction,
- Live alone or buy and prepare their food separately or agree to buy and prepare their food separately from the other people who live with them, and
- Are not living with their spouse or own child who is under 22 years of age.

### **B. Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP)**

FITAP provides cash assistance to families with children when the financial resources of the family are insufficient to meet subsistence needs. FITAP provides case assistance for eligible children who reside in the home of a parent or qualified relative. The overall goal of FITAP is to decrease the long-term dependence on cash assistance by promoting job preparation and work. Public assistance is no longer a lifetime benefit but an opportunity to become independent after a financial crisis.

### **C Strategies to Empower People (STEP) Program**

In order to achieve the ultimate goal of becoming self-sufficient, all work-eligible recipients of FITAP must participate in a work activity such as:

- Any paid employment, including subsidized employment.
- Unpaid work experience programs which provide on-site experience and general job skills development.
- On-the-Job Training
- Job Search/Job Readiness
- Education (Vocational Education, Satisfactory Attendance at a Secondary School/GED Education, Education Directly Related to Employment, or Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment)
- Community Service Programs
- Provision of Child Care for a Community Service Participant also receiving FITAP
- Other Activities (Parenting Skills Training, Counseling Programs-Mental Health, etc., Rehabilitation Programs-Office of Addictive Disorders, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.)

If a work-eligible recipient, without good cause, fails or refuses to participate in assigned activities as specified, a sanction will be applied. Once the FITAP case is closed for failure to comply, it cannot be recertified until the sanction period has been served and the member complies, attains good cause, or meets a temporary exception to STEP participation.

### STEP Supportive Services

Participants may be required to complete certain activities to enable them to participate in STEP, such as;

- Assessments
- Employability planning
- Activities referred by the case worker prior to their participation in work activity, such as drug screening
- Parenting Skills Training
- An activity to cure a sanction
- Approved activities necessary to meet exemptions/extensions to the FITAP time limits
- FITAP Drug Testing Program
- Pre-certification activities

FITAP applicants/recipients who are satisfactorily participating in the STEP Program as determined by their case worker are categorically eligible for [Child Care Assistance](#) (Louisiana Dept. of Education) payments when they select an eligible provider. Transportation payments will be provided when necessary for an individual to participate in STEP activities unless free transportation is available.

Other supportive services may be provided when necessary for STEP participation or to accept or maintain employment including:

- Union Dues – actual amount verified by the employer or training facility, not to exceed \$100
- Other – up to \$600 combined maximum per participant per state fiscal year, such as:
  - Eyeglasses – if verified by medical professional and not provided by Medicaid or other resource
  - Hearing Aids and other small medical appliances – need verified by medical professional and not provided by Medicaid or other resource
  - Uniform/clothing – to be verified by training facility, employer, or case worker
  - Safety equipment – to be verified by training facility or employer
  - Tools – to be verified by training facility or employer. Tools may include any tools of the trade including, but not limited to carpenter's tools, drafting tools, nurse's watches, stethoscope, training material and welding tools
  - Medical exams/tests, drug tests and disease inoculations required for employment or training and not provided by Medicaid or other resource
  - Course pre-requisite costs, employer mandated expenses, other legitimate expenses that facilitate employment or training, if approved by the Supervisor and documented. This may include child care registration fees.

#### **D. Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP)**

KCSP provides cash assistance for eligible children who reside with qualified relatives other than parents.

#### Qualified Relative Requirements:

A child must live in the home with one of the following qualified relatives (either biological or adoptive):

- grandfather or grandmother (extends to great-great-great)
- brother or sister (including half-brother and half-sister)
- uncle or aunt (extends to great-great)
- first cousin, including first cousin once removed (child of a first cousin)
- nephew or niece (extends to great-great)
- stepbrother or stepsister

## DCFS Community Partner Manual

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Relationship extends to the legal spouse of the above listed relatives even after the marriage is terminated by death or divorce.

The relationship requirement is met when the child lives with any of the above named relatives. Legal custody is not a factor in determining relationships.

Legal adoption terminates all prior legal relationships. The biological parent and biological relatives remain qualified relatives due to the blood relationship.

Note: If legal custody, guardianship, or provisional custody by mandate is not obtained within one year of certification, the child is no longer eligible for KCSP benefits. The year begins with the initial month of certification and continues for 11 months thereafter, regardless of program status. The caretaker relative is given the opportunity to apply for FITAP.

### E. Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Program

The Child Support Enforcement Program provides parent locator and paternity establishment services, assistance to establish and enforce child and/or medical support orders, and the collection and distribution of child support payments.

### F. Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (DSNAP), formerly called Disaster Food Stamps

The Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (DSNAP) provides food assistance for eligible households who do not receive regular SNAP benefits and who need help buying groceries due to lost income of damages following a disaster.

## **Chapter 3 – Partner Levels and Responsibilities**

In your Community Partner Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) with DCFS, you chose a level of partnership that you determined would be conducive to the mission of your organization. The three levels of partnership offered by the Department are:

### 1. **Bronze Level Partner**



As a Bronze level partner, your responsibilities include the following:

- Make informational material available such as pamphlets and brochures. These materials will be provided to you by your DCFS Community Partner Liaison, or local DCFS ES office.
- May offer a computer if one is available for public use for applicants to enter their own information in the online application. It is not necessary for your staff to be available to answer questions.
- Offer a paper application if the client prefers to complete a paper application or if no computer is available for public use.
- Provide applicants with a place that affords sufficient privacy to complete the application without compromising confidential information.
- Provide self-addressed, pre-paid envelopes to the client to mail an application and/or verification to the Document Processing Center. Envelopes are provided by your DCFS Liaison upon request.
- May make other office equipment such as telephones, fax machines, copiers, etc. available to the applicants to carry out DCFS program business.



## 2. Silver level Partner

In addition to the responsibilities listed under the Bronze level partner, the Silver level partner must make at least one computer available with Internet access for clients to enter their own information in the online application and have partner staff available to answer questions during the process.

## 3. Gold level Partner

In addition to the responsibilities listed under the Bronze and Silver levels, the Gold level partner must have partner staff available to enter application information on behalf of the applicant upon request.



- **NOTE: Upon receipt of the application, DCFS staff will interview the applicant and determine eligibility for services/benefits.**

The community partner cannot deny the services agreed upon to anyone requesting assistance except in those situations where a client is:

- threatening violent behavior,
- exhibiting violent behavior, or
- creating a significant disturbance on the partner's premises that results in a disruption of normal operations of the partner.

### Other Responsibilities

1. As a Community Partner, you are responsible for assuring and monitoring confidentiality including, but not limited to, the fact that those staff members assisting applicants with the application process are prohibited under the rules of confidentiality from sharing any information about the applicant/recipient received during the application process with any other community partner staff member.

In safeguarding applicant information, you must comply with the following:

- a. Do not discuss applicant information with unauthorized personnel.
- b. Do not sell or release information to third parties.
- c. Do not allow unauthorized personnel to review applicant information.
- d. Do provide applicants a place that affords sufficient privacy to complete the application without compromising confidential information.
- e. Do communicate community partner questions or concerns to the DCFS contact person.

Additional confidentiality requirements are covered in Chapter 7 of this manual.

2. You are required to abide by all Federal and State laws and regulations as they relate to data sharing of pertinent information for performance accountability and program evaluation purposes. Periodic monitoring by State officials or their designees to evaluate work being performed may be necessary; therefore, you must allow access to the premises to evaluate work being performed.
3. One copy of the DCFS Community Partner Manual will be furnished to the facility upon request and at no cost. Subsequent revisions will be made available on the [DCFS Policy Management System](https://public.powerdms.com/LADCFS/documents/393294) (direct) at: <https://public.powerdms.com/LADCFS/documents/393294>. You will be notified when revisions are made to the manual and you will be responsible for updating or replacing your hard copy manual with these changes.
4. You are responsible for contacting your DCFS Community Partner Liaison to obtain DCFS informational flyers. In the event a DCFS Community Partner Cooperative Endeavor Agreement is

terminated by either party, you will be responsible for returning any unused informational material to DCFS.

5. You and your staff members who assist the applicants are required to participate in initial and periodic training provided by DCFS or their designee. New staff that will have contact with the applicants must be trained before working with the applicants. It is your responsibility to contact your DCFS Community Partner Liaison to request training for the new staff member or follow-up training as needed. Certification of Training Certificates will be given to a Community Partner staff member upon completion of the training.

You and your staff members must complete the SNAP Civil Rights Trainings and SOS National Voters Registration Act Training each year. All new staff members must receive this training before working with applicants. It is your responsibility to contact your DCFS Community Partner Liaison to request these trainings for new staff as needed. You will be given instructions on how to access the computerized training via email.

6. You must not keep copies of application forms or any other documents that contain applicant information that was obtained during the process of assisting applicants.
7. If assisting in completion of applications or providing language interpretation services, you must abide by the restrictions and requirements in regards to:
  - a. Fraud prevention and reporting. This will be discussed in Chapter 9, Community Partner Oversight.
  - b. Prohibitions against coaching applicants to make themselves eligible for benefits. This will be discussed in Chapter 9.
  - c. Providing assistance to persons with limited English proficiency, hearing and/or visual impairments. This will be discussed in Chapter 10, Nondiscrimination Policy.
  - d. Informing all clients that voter registration is available and providing the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993 information to clients. This will be discussed in chapter 10, Nondiscrimination Policy.
8. You will be assigned a unique Community Partner Identification Number (CPIN) by the Department. This number must appear on all documents, transmissions, and notifications associated with services provided during this partnership.

Executive Management uses the CPIN's to produce reports that track online and paper applications originating from Community Partner (CP) sites. These reports are available to all CP's upon request. Many CP's use them for grant applications as well as general documenting of activities to inform staff and potential donors.

Please ensure your CPIN is written on the top left or right hand corner the first page of every application you make available.

In order to capture the CPIN for online applications, see page 1 of the online application. Instruct or assist all applicants in selecting one of the following options to populate the "Community Partner Site ID" field under "Using LA CAFÉ" on the [CAFÉ Customer Portal](#):



**\*Using LA CAFÉ**

Before you get started, we'd like to know more about how you're using LA CAFÉ.

- I am applying for myself, for a family member, for someone in my household, and/or for a non-family member.
- I am applying for myself, for a family member, for someone in my household, and/or for a non-family member at a community partner site.
- I am a community partner assisting a client.
- I am a DCFS employee assisting a customer.

After making that selection, enter your CPIN into the CPIN field.

**Community Partners**

\* Community Partner Site ID:

The CPIN Structure:

The first two digits represent the parish number according to alphabetical order.

Example: 01 – Acadia Parish

The third digit represents the partner level.

- 1 – Gold
- 2 – Silver
- 3 – Bronze

The fourth digit represents the type of entity.

- 1 – Government
- 2 – Non-Profit
- 3 – Business/Private
- 4 – Faith-based
- 5 – Contracted Outreach
- 6 – Other

The fifth and sixth digits represent the sequential number assigned per operational partner in each parish. Ex: A CPIN of 012203 means that the partner is located in Acadia Parish, a Silver level partner, a non-profit organization and the third operational partner in Acadia Parish.

9. You must have a safety program in place that will provide for a safe office and working environment. Planning and directing a regular program of safety inspections and safety audits will help ensure a safe environment for the employees and clients. Inspections should be conducted to discover possible unsafe conditions in the work area. The following represents a safety checklist that may be utilized during these inspections.
  - a) Is the floor clear of litter or spilled liquids?
  - b) Are the floor surfaces clear of worn spots or holes?
  - c) Are warning signs posted near cleaning areas, repair work or redecorating efforts?
  - d) Are aisles free of boxes, wastebaskets, chairs, and other obstacles that impede traffic?
  - e) Are restrooms kept clean and floors dry?
  - f) Are electrical cords in good condition, i.e. not frayed or deteriorated?


DCFS Community Partner Manual

- g) Are desk or file drawers closed if unattended?
- h) Are files evenly distributed with emptier drawers on the top and fuller drawers on the bottom?
- i) Is only one file drawer open at a time?
- j) Is machinery turned off when not in use?
- k) Are paper cutters kept in a safe location with the blade secured in the down or closed position?
- l) Are fire exits clearly marked?
- m) Are fire extinguisher inspection tags current?
- n) Are fire extinguisher locations marked in such a way that they are visible from a distance?
- o) Do all employees know the locations of the exits, alarms, and extinguishers?
- p) Are flammable liquids/fluids stored in approved containers?
- q) Are emergency numbers for medical, fire, law enforcement/security and ambulance posted?
- r) Are fire drills conducted annually?
- s) Are doors to enclosed stairwells kept closed at all times?
- t) Are first-aid supplies available?

**Chapter 4 – Programs/Services Directory**

Listing	Phone Number	Reason to Call
Louisiana Relay Service	TDD - 1-800-846-5277 Voice - 1-800-947-5277	Assistance for hearing impaired applicants
State Government Directory Assistance	1-800-256-7777	General information for State agencies
DCFS Customer Service - for case specific information	1-888-LA HELP U (1-888-524-3578)	For information and how to apply for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps)</li> <li>• Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamps)</li> <li>• Louisiana Combined Application Project (LaCAP)</li> <li>• Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP)</li> <li>• Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP)</li> <li>• Child Support Enforcement (CSE)</li> </ul>
<b>DCFS Community Partner Liaison:</b> Donica Conaway P.O. Box 94065 Baton Rouge, LA 70822	225-342-4008 225-418-0614	• System and general information questions.

DCFS Community Partner Manual

DCFS Bureau of General Counsel – Civil Rights Section Valerie Clark P.O. Box 1887 Baton Rouge, LA 70821 <a href="mailto:DCFS.BureauofCivilRights@LA.GOV">DCFS.BureauofCivilRights@LA.GOV</a>	225-342-0309	
Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Customer Service  <i>* For benefit recipients only. Direct all eligibility questions to the customer service line above.</i>	1-888-997-1117	Recipients Customer Service number to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report a lost or stolen card</li> <li>• Report a card not functioning</li> <li>• Select or change a PIN</li> <li>• Check the balance in their account(s)</li> <li>• Review past transactions or request a transaction history report</li> <li>• File a claim reporting a POS or ATM discrepancy/overcharge</li> <li>• Ask questions regarding the Louisiana Purchase Card that do not relate to eligibility.</li> </ul>
Child Support Enforcement - DCFS	1-888-LA HELP U (1-888-524-3578)	For information or case worker contact requests regarding Child Support Enforcement
Fraud and Recovery - DCFS Programs	1-888-LA HELP U (1-888-524-3578)	To report fraud for SNAP, FITAP, and/or KCSP
<a href="#">Adult Protective Services Hotline</a> LDH	1-800-898-4910	To report abuse and/or neglect of an adult
Louisiana Adoption Resource Exchange	1-800-259-3428	A resource center for people interested in adoption
Child Welfare Offices - DCFS  <i>*To REPORT CHILD ABUSE use hotline below</i> 	Orleans/Jefferson - 1-504-361-6161 Baton Rouge - 1-866-886-1001 Covington - 1-985-893-6225 Thibodaux - 1-800-748-7755 Lafayette - 1-800-256-8611 Lake Charles - 1-800-814-1584 Alexandria - 1-800-814-1585 Shreveport - 1-800-676-5048 Monroe - 1-800-256-8654	To find out information or to become a foster/adoptive parent
<b>Louisiana Child Abuse Hotline - DCFS</b>	1-855-4 LA KIDS (1-855-452-5437)	24/7 hotline for reporting child abuse or neglect.
<a href="#">Safe Haven</a>	1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373)	For information regarding the Safe Haven Law and sites stipulated as safe places to anonymously relinquish one's infant less than 60 days old.

DCFS Community Partner Manual

<a href="#">Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, Louisiana</a> - LDH  Regional Human Services Authorities/Districts	Acadiana Area: 337-262-5610 Capital Area: 225-925-1910 Central Louisiana: 318-484-2347 Florida Parishes: 985-543-4730 Imperial Calcasieu: 337-475-8045 Jefferson Parish: 504-838-5357 Metro New Orleans: 504-599-0245 Northeast Delta: 318-362-3396 Northwest La: 318-741-7455 South Central La: 985-876-8805	Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities services
Division of Disability Determinations Services	Baton Rouge - 1-800-256-2288 Shreveport - 1-800-256-2266 New Orleans - 1-800-256-2299	
Office of Elderly Affairs <a href="http://goea.louisiana.gov/">http://goea.louisiana.gov/</a>	225-342-7100	
Domestic Violence Hotline	1-888-411-1333	
Medicaid - Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals	1-888-342-6207	For Medicaid eligibility
La. Child Health Insurance Program (LaCHIP) Processing	1-877-252-2447	Applications and eligibility
Medicaid Fraud	By provider: 1-800-488-2917 By recipient: 1-888-342-6207	Reporting Medicaid fraud.
Home Health Complaints	1-800-327-3419	
Hospital Complaints	1-866-280-7737	
Long Term Care/Nursing Home Complaints	1-888-810-1819	

DCFS Community Partner Liaison:

For all DCFS Community Partner concerns, application or information brochure requests, and policy or process questions, please do not hesitate to call:

Donica Conaway  
DCFS Community Partner Liaison  
225-342-4008  
225-418-0614  
[Donica.Conaway.DCFS@LA.GOV](mailto:Donica.Conaway.DCFS@LA.GOV)  
P.O. Box 94065  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

## **Chapter 5 – The Application Process**

The Application for Assistance ([form OFS 4APP](#)) is used by households applying for the Family Independence Temporary Assistance (FITAP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP). The form requires the recipient to make his own statement to DCFS concerning household members, income and other information needed to determine eligibility for assistance.

If the applicant cannot read or understand English and indicates that Spanish or Vietnamese is their primary language you may refer the applicant to the nearest DCFS parish office and/or print and provide the applicant with the [Spanish version of the OFS 4APP](#) or [Vietnamese version of the OFS 4APP](#).

As a Gold or Silver Level Partner, you may also access Language Line Services by calling 1-877-245-0386, entering the DCFS Client ID number and the applicable parish access code. Refer to Appendix A. Limited English Proficiency – Language Line for more information.

An online application guide for CAFÉ (Common Access Front End) customer portal is available in Appendix B and on your Community Partner Training Slideshow. It will help you in assisting DCFS applicants complete the electronic application available through the DCFS website at: [www.dcf.la.gov/cafe](http://www.dcf.la.gov/cafe)

If Community Partners are having trouble accessing the online application form or if issues arise with the application while you are assisting an applicant in completing the form, you should:

- ✓ First check your network for any problems and test other websites that require a log in.
- ✓ If other sites work, call the DCFS IT Help Desk at 225-219-6900 or 1-844-219-6900 to troubleshoot the problem. **NOTE:** These two phones numbers are for use by the Community Partner only and **should never be given to the applicants.**
- ✓ The DCFS IT Help Desk will not troubleshoot or support your computer hardware. The help desk is only able to provide assistance with issues related to the online application.

If you are providing the applicant with a paper Application for Assistance (OFS 4APP), you must also provide him with the form OFS 4I - Information about the Application for Assistance. This is required by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. The Community Partner Liaison will provide you with this form along with the paper application. If a client applies for benefits using the online application, you will not need to provide the OFS 4I as it is included as a part of the online application.

Additional information about the application is available:

- ❖ on the form OFS 4I. The form is also available online through the DCFS policy Management System at: [www.dcf.louisiana.gov/fam](http://www.dcf.louisiana.gov/fam); or
- ❖ by calling 1-888-LA-HELP-U; or
- ❖ by calling your DCFS Community Partner Liaison as noted in Chapter 4 of the Training Manual.

If the applicant needs to contact DCFS after an application is submitted, please advise the applicant to contact the Customer Service Center at 1-888-LA-HELP-U. The Customer Service Representative will ask for the applicant's social security number or the Case ID number associated with the case. If the information is not available, other types of information may be provided to the Customer Service Representative in order for them to access the account. These alternative identifiers include the full name, date of birth and Application Identification Number. The Application Identification Number is available on the screen once an application is submitted.

## **Chapter 6 – Required Verification (SNAP, FITAP, KCSP)**

Verification means proof of the information reported. The following lists the information that must be verified by each program and examples of the proof that is required. The person applying for benefits should let a worker know if they have any questions about what must be provided or if they need help in getting the proof. It is the Department's responsibility to help individuals get the proof that is needed.

<b>What Must be Verified and Examples of Proof</b>	<b>SNAP</b>	<b>FITAP (Cash)</b>	<b>KCSP (Cash)</b>
<b>Identity</b> – driver's license, work or school ID, ID for health benefits or another social services program, voter's registration card, check stub, or birth certificate	X		
<b>Age/Relationship</b> - birth certificate, baptismal certificate, or hospital birth records of the person to be included. If not your own child, birth records to prove how the child is related to you		X	X
<b>Social Security Number</b> - copy of the social security card or papers you received at the hospital for a newborn	X	X	X
<b>Alien status</b> - if not a U.S. citizen, forms or cards from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services that prove each non-citizen household member listed on application is a legal alien	X	X	X
<b>Wages</b> - last 4 pay check stubs or employer's statement for each person who works	X	X	X
<b>Self-employment</b> - income tax returns, sales records, quarterly tax records, personal wage record	X	X	X
<b>Other income such as contributions, child support, alimony, Social Security, SSI, VA, retirement checks, Unemployment Compensation (UCB)</b> - award letters, court orders, statements from contributors	X	X	X
<b>Income that stopped within the last 3 months</b> – pink slip, termination notice, or statement from former employer, termination notice or statement from source of any income that ended	X	X	X
<b>Medical expenses</b> - receipts, pharmacy printouts for last 3 months, doctor bills or other papers that show medical expenses for household members who are disabled or over age 59	X		
<b>Child support payments made to someone outside your home</b> – court order or other legal papers and proof that you are making payments such as cancelled checks or wage withholding statements	X		
<b>Immunization</b> - shot, school, or doctor's records		X	X
<b>Custody</b> - court order, other legal papers, or provisional custody by Mandate			X
<b>Home</b> - proof of who lives in the home; such as current school records, landlord's written statement or the name and phone number of two people (not related to you) who know your situation		X	X

## **Chapter 7 - Confidentiality**

### **A. Scope**

DCFS, as an agency of the State, is responsible for a large volume of documents. The flow of these documents must be protected, depending upon a need to insure the character and integrity of certain sensitive materials. This policy is intended to protect as privileged any record or information of this Department in accordance with [the provisions of R.S. 46:56](#) and as modified by any other confidentiality statute or regulation. The policy also provides for obtaining confidential information from outside sources.

It is the policy of DCFS to adhere to the confidentiality of client applications and information and case records as prescribed in R.S. 46:56 and any other state and federal statute or regulation.

R.S. 46:56 provides that all applications for assistance and all case records concerning DCFS clients shall be confidential, with the exception of the name of the recipient and the amount of financial assistance paid him for certain programs. This provision is superseded by any Federal regulation and/or statute that prohibit the release of information.

Although the law provides exceptions for release of certain information in specific programs, such information should only be released by a DCFS case worker in that particular program, and not by workers in other programs.

### **B. Responsibilities**

It shall be the responsibility of the Department and Community Partner to see that access to DCFS confidential records shall be in accordance with this policy. All documents, case records, and DCFS client information required to be maintained as confidential by R.S.46:56 shall be held in strict accord with the provisions of R.S. 46:56 and any other state and federal statute or regulation.

Release of confidential information or exceptions shall only be made with the approval of the Department and only when authorized in accordance with R.S. 46:56 or the respective program policy manual or other pertinent confidentiality statutes or regulations.

It is very important to remember that if you, as a Community Partner, receive a request for confidential information from anyone or if a question exists regarding confidential information, forward the request and/or question to your Community Partner Liaison.

### **C. Information Services**

To insure confidentiality in the use of DCFS computer terminals for accessing or retrieving information, the user must have a password and user ID validation. Even then, use of this information is restricted to actions directly connected with the administration of the programs of the department.

### **D. Information Not Subject to Waiver of Confidentiality**

Case record information specified in R.S. 46:56 (i.e., records pertaining to foster care of children, investigations of abuse and neglect of children, and other child welfare services) is not subject to the waiver of confidentiality provisions. Such information shall not be released to applicants, recipients, or outside sources, other than those outside sources engaged in the administration of the programs of the Department, unless otherwise allowed by the statute.

### **E. Release of Protected Health Information**

As required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), Form DCFS 35-H shall be used to obtain authorization for the release of protected health information by covered entities.

The HIPAA Privacy Rule defines “protected health information” as “any information, whether oral or recorded in any form or medium, that:

- 1) is created or received by a health care provider, health plan, public health authority, employer, life insurer, school or university, or health care clearinghouse; and
- 2) relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual; the provision of health care to an individual; or the past, present, or future payments for the provision of health care to an individual.”

“Covered entities” are defined as “health care providers (e.g., physicians, psychologists, hospital), health plans (e.g., Medicaid), and health care clearinghouses.”

#### **F. Information to Be Safeguarded**

The names of applicants for assistance and information contained in DCFS case records of clients of the DCFS shall be confidential. Except as otherwise provided, it shall be unlawful for any person to solicit, disclose, receive, make use of, or to authorize, knowingly permit, participate in, or acquiesce in the use of applications or client case records or the information contained therein for any purpose not directly connected with the administration of the DCFS program(s).

Publication of lists of names of clients or applicants is prohibited.

#### **G. Documents which Contain References to IRS**

Any document containing Federal Tax Information cannot be made available to any outside source, including some entities not considered an outside source for other purposes. These entities include:

- Child Support Enforcement,
- Child Welfare,
- Bureau of General Counsel,
- Individuals involved in the investigation and prosecution of criminal offenses related to DCFS programs,
- Governmental entities authorized by laws to conduct audits or reviews in connection with the administration of DCFS programs,
- Agencies of other states performing IV-D activities, and
- Any other entity not involved in determining eligibility for FITAP, KCSP, or SNAP or in determining the correct amount of benefits for FITAP, KCSP, or SNAP.

#### **H. Precautions in Safeguarding Information**

##### **1. Informal Discussions:**

All staff members, clerical as well as professional, and community partner staff members shall refrain from discussing client situations informally in offices, restrooms, while in transit or at social gatherings, regardless of whether the client’s name is used. The use of names or of unusual circumstances in discussion can easily lead to identification of the client by someone listening. Regardless of the possibility of identification, such discussions may create the impression that staff members deal lightly with information received and do not have the proper respect for the affairs of others.



## 2. Photocopying of U.S. Government Checks

U.S. Government checks or other security of the United States and postage stamps, revenue stamps, notes, bonds and any other obligation or other security of any foreign government, bank or corporation may be photocopied or otherwise reproduced for verification or documentation purposes in accordance with the following: All copies must be produced in black and white, and all copies must be reduced to a size less than three-fourths or increased to more than one and a half of the original size. Photocopiers should be set at 73% or less or 153% or more to ensure compliance with federal requirements.

### I. Violation of Confidentiality

Louisiana R.S. 46:56 provides that any person who violates confidentiality "shall be fined not more than two thousand five hundred dollars or imprisoned for not more than two years in the parish jail, or both, nor less than five hundred dollars or ninety days on each count."

DCFS employees and community partner staff members who violate confidentiality are subject to disciplinary actions and/or criminal penalties described above.

### J. Confidentiality and Safeguard Requirements of Federal Information

Any data received from a federal agency pursuant to administering federal benefit programs must be safeguarded from unauthorized disclosure according to the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 522a, as amended, including information from the Social Security Administration, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

The following confidentiality requirements, pertaining to the dissemination of information, must be followed:

- The community partner staff member must maintain in its records only such information about an individual as is relevant to accomplish a purpose required to be accomplished by statute or by Executive Order of the President.
- The community partner staff member must establish appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to insure security and confidentiality of records and to protect against any anticipated threats or hazards to their security or integrity which could result in substantial harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to any individual on whom information is maintained [5 USC 552a(e)(10)].
- Community Partner staff may not disclose any data received from a federal source except to a DCFS employee assisting in administration of a program.
- Making copies of federal information is restricted to verification, which is necessary to administer the program.
- All documents copied and/or produced from a federal source must be immediately returned to the client.

### K. Penalties for Violating Confidentiality of Federal Information

Community partner staff members who violate the confidentiality of applicants and recipients for assistance from state administered federal programs are subject to civil and criminal penalties.

- ❖ Civil penalties:

- Actual damages sustained by the individual as a result of the offense but in no case shall a person entitled to recovery receive less than the sum of \$1,000; and
  - The costs of the action together with reasonable attorney fees as determined by the court [5USC 552a(g)(4)].
- ❖ Criminal penalties:
- Misdemeanor and fined not more than \$5,000. "Any officer or contracted employee of an agency, who by virtue of his employment or official position, has possession of, or access to, agency records which contain individually identifiable information the disclosure of which is prohibited by this section or by rules or regulations established thereunder, and who knowing that disclosure of the specific material is so prohibited, willfully discloses the material in any manner to any person or agency not entitled to receive it shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than \$5,000." [5 USC 552a(i)(1)] The Internal Revenue Code states that the maximum penalty for a violation by a state or other employee "shall be a felony punishable by a fine in any amount not exceeding \$5,000 or imprisonment of not more than 5 years, or both, together with the cost of prosecution." [IRC Sec.7213(2)].

#### **L. Confidentiality Agreement Form**

The Community Partner understands that all staff members must read, agree to, sign, and date the Community Partner Staff Confidentiality Agreement before providing assistance to DCFS applicants. The signed forms must be scan/emailed, faxed or mailed back to your Community Partner Liaison for DCFS records. Partners are encouraged to keep a copy for themselves.

### **Chapter 8 - Computer Security Policy Guidelines**

Maintaining the security of confidential information by DCFS is required under several state and federal statutes. To be effective, information security must be a team effort involving the participation and support of every person who deals with information and/or information systems. As a Community Partner, you should report security violations or suspicious activity to your DCFS Community Partner Liaison.

#### **Instruct applicants to:**

- Use good passwords. See the **Passwords** section for specific help with passwords.
- Log off and close browser on the PC when they have finished completing the application.

#### **Instruct applicants not to:**

- Allow unauthorized persons to access CONFIDENTIAL information.
- Leave CONFIDENTIAL information where unauthorized persons may view it.
- Print CONFIDENTIAL information unless it is needed for DCFS business.
- Leave printers unattended while printing CONFIDENTIAL information.
- Remove CONFIDENTIAL information from DCFS without authorization.
- Attempt to hack, test, disable, or probe a DCFS network.
- Attempt to bypass the security measures on a DCFS network.
- Send CONFIDENTIAL information over non-DCFS networks unencrypted to DCFS.

#### **REMEMBER**

- ✓ Good security is a team effort. Report all suspected policy violations and other conditions that might jeopardize DCFS information or DCFS information systems immediately to your DCFS Liaison.

- ✓ Community Partners who willingly and deliberately violate the DCFS Security Network will be subject to immediate termination of agreement.

**PASSWORD Instructions for applicants:**

Difficult-to-Guess Passwords: Choose passwords that are difficult to guess. Passwords should not be related to one's job or personal life. For example, a car license plate number, a family member's name, or fragments of your address should not be used. Passwords should not be a word found in the dictionary or other part of speech. For example, proper names, places, technical terms, and slang should not be used.

Easily Remembered Passwords: Users can choose easily-remembered passwords that are at the same time difficult for unauthorized parties to guess if they:

- a. String several words together. The resulting passwords are "passphrases". (example: the bighouse)
- b. Shift a word up, down, left or right one row on the keyboard. (ex: "password" becomes "olaaqies")
- c. Bump characters in a word to certain number of letters up or down the alphabet. (ex: "password" becomes "qbtzps")
- d. Transform a regular word according to a specific method, such as making every other letter a number reflecting its position in the word. (Example: "password" becomes "p2s4w6r8")
- e. Combine punctuation or numbers with a regular word (Example: pass.w0rd1)
- f. Create acronyms from words in a song, a poem, or another known sequence of words. (Example: "A penny saved is a penny earned" becomes "apsiape")
- g. Deliberately misspell a word, but not a common misspelling. (Example: "password" becomes "pathwert")
- h. Combine a number of personal facts like birth dates and favorite colors. (Example: blue1211)

**Chapter 9 - Community Partner Oversight**

1. Federal regulations require that each state establish partner oversight to ensure the quality of service and the adherence to State and Federal Law. Federal regulations require there be methods of investigation or review that ascertain the facts without infringing on the legal rights of the Community Partners.
2. Fraud is determined in accordance with State and Federal law. The definition of fraud that governs citizens and government agencies are Louisiana R.S. 46:114 and R.S 46:114.2.  

R.S 46:114.2 Attempting or aiding to obtain assistance fraudulently.  
***Any person who obtains or attempts to obtain or aids and abets anyone to obtain assistance from the Department of Social Services or the Department of Health and Hospitals by means of any false statement, misrepresentation, or other fraudulent device or violates the provisions of R.S. 46:114 shall be guilty of theft as provided by R.S. 14:67.***
3. Prosecution for fraud and the imposition of a penalty, if the Community Partner is found guilty, are prescribed by law and are the responsibility of law enforcement officials and the courts. All legal action is subject to due process of the law and to protection of the rights of an individual afforded by this process.
4. Penalties assessed as a result of fraud shall be a felony punishable by a fine in any amount not exceeding \$5,000.00 or imprisonment of not more than five (5) years, or both, together with the costs of prosecution.
5. The following situations shall constitute sufficient grounds for a fraud referral of a Community Partner:
  - Misrepresentation of facts in order to assist an applicant to become eligible to receive benefits under the Family Assistance Programs.
  - Misrepresentation of facts in order to assist clients to obtain greater benefits once determined eligible.

- Misrepresentation by Community Partner personnel by the disclosure of information obtained from Family Assistance applications for personal gain.
  - Misrepresentation by Community Partner personnel by assisting each other in completing Family Assistance applications.
  - Complaints or reports by mail, telephone or in person.
  - Cases referred by USDA from complaints received by their office.
  - Situations brought to light by special reviews, audits, inspections or monitoring of Community Partners.
  - Referrals from other agencies.
6. Oversight will be carried out by DCFS personnel who may include Fraud and Recovery Unit employees, Community Specialists, Parish or Regional Office employees or Bureau of Civil Rights employees, through:
- on-site monitoring visits,
  - reviews of a sampling of applications received from the community partner, and
  - interviews with applicants served by the community partner.
7. Individuals are encouraged to report cases of suspected fraud by Community Partner personnel or an applicant by calling the DCFS toll-free hot line at 1-800-256-3150 or by visiting the website at: [www.dcfslouisiana.gov/reportfraud](http://www.dcfslouisiana.gov/reportfraud)

Department of Children and Family Services  
Fraud and Recovery Section  
P.O. Box 91147  
Barton Rouge, La. 70821-9147

## **Chapter 10 – Nondiscrimination Policy**

As a community partner, you will be responsible for adhering to the same Civil Rights laws and guidelines as DCFS. This chapter will serve as a guide and resource for you. The Bureau of Civil Rights can be contacted at 225-342-0309 or 225-342-5169 if further assistance is needed. Bureau staff can also assist you with Civil Rights training if desired.

### **A. Purpose and Scope**

DCFS will administer all programs and conduct its business, either directly or indirectly or through contractual or other arrangements, in accordance with federal and state laws, regulations, executive orders and related other guidance, including but not limited to the following.

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended** (Title VI): A federal law that prohibits discrimination against persons on the basis of race, color, and national origin on the part of any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended** (Section 504): A federal law that prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability on the part of any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

**Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 80, as amended** (Title 45): A federal law that effectuates and extends the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to any program or activity receiving federal assistance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**Methods of Administration (MOA), State Plans of Operation and Federal/State Agreements:** Agreements with various federal funding agencies requiring civil rights compliance and/or outlining the methods to be used in complying with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other applicable civil rights laws and regulations.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA):** A federal law that prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability.

**Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, as amended (Title IX):** A federal law that prohibits discrimination against persons on the basis of sex on the part of any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

**The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended:** A federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of age (unless age is a bona fide program eligibility criterion) on the part of any program, service, or activity receiving federal financial assistance unless otherwise allowed under federal, state or local law.

**The Civil Rights Restoration Act (CRRRA) of 1987:** A federal law amending Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 to establish that the provisions of these four statutes apply to all the operations of a department or agency when any part of the department or agency receives federal financial assistance.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Regulations (DR 4330-2):** Regulations that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability on the part of any program, service or activity receiving Federal financial assistance from the USDA.

**Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended:** A federal law that prohibits discrimination in the certification of applicant household for SNAP because of an individual's race, sex, religion, national origin, and/or political belief.

**USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Instructions, 113 Series:** Federal procedures for civil rights compliance and enforcement of SNAP, Special Nutrition programs, and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs.

**USDA Food and Nutrition Services Civil Rights Instruction 113 Series:** A directive that provides FNS policy on nondiscrimination and outlines specific responsibilities necessary by recipient agencies/states to seek compliance with the relevant civil rights laws and regulations.

**Executive Order 13166:** A federal regulation that mandates a federal aid recipient's assurance that applicants and beneficiaries who are not proficient in English can meaningfully and effectively participate in and benefit from federally assisted programs and activities.

**Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994, as amended by the Interethnic Adoption Provisions of 1996 (MEPA-IEP):** A federal law that prohibits a state or other entity from delaying or denying the placement of a child for adoption or placement in foster care on the basis of the race, color, or national origin of the adoptive or foster parent, or the child involved.

**Block Grants:** Provisions of federal and state law that prohibit discrimination in the delivery of services funded through Block Grants (P.L. 97-35 and LA R.S. 49:673).

**National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993:** Federal legislation requires state governments to allow from registration when qualifying voter applied for social services.

The policy shall apply to all DCFS offices providing financial or social services. The policy shall also apply to any agency providing these services whether directly or indirectly or through contractual or other arrangements in accordance with those provisions of federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination in the delivery of services. This complaint procedure carries out the regulations for Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Federal Block Grants (P.L. 97-35 and P.L. 104-193).

**B. DCFS Discrimination Policy Statement**

No persons shall on the basis of age, sex, religion, race, color, national origin, political affiliation, or disability (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs) be excluded from participation in; be denied the benefits of; or be subjected to discrimination and/or rude or hostile treatment under any program or activity conducted in the department. DCFS will take appropriate action to ensure that the above will be implemented at all levels of administration.

Furthermore, DCFS agencies, including contractors, licensees, or other entities providing DCFS agency services, shall not intimidate, threaten, coerce, discriminate, or take any retaliatory action against any person for the purpose of interfering with any right protected under civil rights laws, statutes, or policies or because he/she has:

- opposed any practice that is unlawful according to civil rights laws, contrary to DCFS civil rights policies or practices, or is believed to be in violation of civil rights laws, statutes, or policies; or
- made a charge, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under any civil rights law, statute, or policy.

**C. Rude and/or Hostile Treatment**

DCFS will not condone rudeness, disrespect, or any other alleged ill-treatment of or toward program applicants/participants or the general public. Any substantiated claim of ill-treatment of these individuals will be considered as noncompliance with DCFS policies and procedures related to non-discrimination in service provision.

**D. Language Assistance to Persons with Limited-English Proficiency (LEP)**

DCFS will take reasonable steps to provide services and information in appropriate languages other than English in order to ensure that LEP persons are effectively informed and can meaningfully participate in and benefit from its programs and services.

DCFS is responsible for:

- Developing written policies and procedures to identify the language needs of clients/recipients.
- Providing access and language assistance services in a timely manner during hours of operation. Such services may be provided through one or more of the following:
  - Oral interpretation services
  - Bilingual staff
  - Telephone interpreter lines
  - Written language services
  - Community volunteers
- Disseminating language assistance services policies and procedures to community partner staff.
- Posting and maintaining signs in regularly encountered languages other than English in waiting rooms, reception areas and other points of entry. The department will supply Community Partners with signage that must be posted in their facility. These signs must inform applicants/beneficiaries of their right to free language assistance service and invite those to identify themselves as persons needing such services.
- Conducting regular monitoring of the language assistance program to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to the program/services.

A Community Partner who does not have a qualified interpreter on staff should refer an applicant with LEP to the nearest DCFS office for assistance. If you are assisting applicants to complete the Application for Assistance or answering questions, you may utilize Language Line Services. See Appendix A. of the Training Manual for additional information about this service.

**E. Disability Accommodation and Auxiliary Aids and Services**

DCFS will take reasonable steps to ensure that all physical sites are accessible and barrier free and provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to accommodate the needs of clients/recipients with disabilities in order to ensure that they can effectively participate in and benefit from its programs and services.

Auxiliary aids and services may include but are not limited to the following:

- Qualified interpreters or other effective methods of making aurally delivered material available to persons with hearing impairments.
- Qualified readers, taped texts, or other effective methods of making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments.
- Acquisition or modification of equipment or devices.

**F. Assurance of Equal Access to Services**

It is the policy of DCFS to resolve all complaints alleging discrimination and/or rude or hostile treatment based on age, race, color, sex, disability, religion, national origin or political affiliation in a prompt and efficient manner and in compliance with the federal requirements of the agencies providing services.

Any person who believes that he or she or any specific class of persons has been subjected to discrimination and/or rude or hostile treatment in any agency program, may personally or by a representative file a written complaint with the DCFS Civil Rights Bureau and/or the federal agency.

Verbal or written complaints may be filed directly with the Department. The identity of the complainants will be kept confidential except to the extent necessary for conducting the investigation. Any act or acts of intimidation or retaliation against any individual making a complaint shall be prohibited.

The Department is responsible for maintaining a record of all complaints received. Such record shall document the nature of the complaint, the details, the investigation, and actions taken.

1. A complaint may be filed with the DCFS Civil Rights Bureau:

Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)  
Civil Rights Bureau  
PO Box 3496  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

And/or the following federal oversight agencies:

Programs such as FITAP, Foster Care, etc.:	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):
Dept. of Health and Human Services (DHHS)	U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Regional Office for Civil Rights	Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)
1301 Young Street – Suite 1169	Regional Office for Civil Rights
Dallas, TX 75202	1100 Commerce Street, Room 5-A-6
	Dallas, TX 75242

2. The complaint must be filed no later than 180 calendar days from the date of the alleged discriminatory act or acts.
3. The complaint must describe the type of discrimination/rude or hostile treatment alleged, indicate when and where such discrimination/rude or hostile treatment took place and describe all pertinent facts and circumstances surrounding the alleged discrimination.

4. All complaint records will be available for review by DCFS, DHHS, USDA, DOE and other authorized officials.

### **G. Reasonable Accommodation**

DCFS will comply with the requirements of all applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and guidelines including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Part 84 of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. DCFS will also comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) which requires employers to consider whether reasonable accommodations could remove the barrier to employment opportunities for the disabled. Employment opportunities shall not be denied because of the need to make reasonable accommodations to an individual's disability. DCFS will assure that all individuals contracting with the agency to provide services also comply with Section 504 and the ADA.

The purpose of this policy is to provide reasonable accommodations for the known physical and mental limitations of otherwise qualified applicants and employees with disabilities, unless the department can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of its program. DCFS will assure that its programs and those of contractors with the agency are accessible to persons with disabilities. DCFS will provide auxiliary aids to persons with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills where necessary to allow such individuals the opportunity to benefit from the agency's services. DCFS will also assure that persons contracting with the agency provide such auxiliary aids.

The office/agency appointing authority or designee has the responsibility to ensure that this policy is posted for full public view in conspicuous places within each office facility.

## **Chapter 11 – Questions & Answers Regarding the Application Process**

1. How does a person apply for assistance?
  - Go to [www.dcfsla.gov/cafe](http://www.dcfsla.gov/cafe) to complete and submit the online Application for Assistance, form OFS 4APP. Individuals may also call 1-888-LAHELPU (1-888-524-3578) to apply over the telephone.
  - If access to a computer with internet service is not available, a person may complete a paper application and return the completed form to any parish/district DCFS office or Community Partner location.
  - One form may be used to apply for FITAP, SNAP, and KCSP.
  - A separate application may be filed for SNAP. Whether an application for SNAP is filed with another program or separately, the SNAP application will be processed according to the same SNAP procedures, including timeliness, notice, and fair hearing requirements.
  - If an application for SNAP is filed jointly with another program and benefits are denied for the other program, another application for SNAP does not have to be turned in. SNAP benefits may not be denied just because a person may not be eligible for benefits from another program.
  - Eligibility will be determined for all programs applied for.
  - An interview must be conducted by a DCFS employee if a person applies for FITAP, SNAP, or KCSP.
  - Verification must be uploaded to Café or faxed or mailed to the document processing center:
    - Upload to Café by logging in then clicking:
      - My Applications > View Status > Upload Documents
      - Check My Cases > case details > + Upload
      - Immediately after submitting a new application click Upload Documents.



- Mail to: Document Processing Center  
PO Box 260031  
Baton Rouge, LA 70826
  - Fax to: 225-663-3164
  - **Write first name, last name, case number and last 4 digits of SSN in top corner of each page so that document can be easily matched to the correct case, “Case ID #: - - - - - - - - - - “**
2. What if a person needs help completing an application form?
- A person may ask someone including a community partner staff member to help them fill out the form, or
  - A person may ask the DCFS worker during the interview to help fill out the form.
3. What happens after the DCFS office receives the application form?
- The application must be interviewed, if the application is for FITAP, SNAP, or KCSP. The applicant must call 1-888-LAHELPU (1-888-524-3578) anytime between 8:00 AM and 2:00 PM Monday – Friday to complete the interview over the telephone. The applicant will not receive a specific appointment date/time to be interviewed. Please do not wait to call. A scheduled interview appointment or face-to-face interview is available upon request by calling 1-888-LAHELPU (1-888-524-3578) The analyst who conducts the interview will be assigned to determine eligibility.
  - If the applicant fails to contact the Customer Service Contact Center within five days to complete the interview, a notice will be mailed advising the applicant that they missed the interview and they must contact the Customer Service Contact Center no later than the 30<sup>th</sup> day after their application date or the application will be denied.
  - A list of required verification will be given and/or mailed to the person applying.
  - Eligibility will be determined within 30 days from the date of the application.
  - A letter will be generated to tell the person if they are eligible or not.
  - If a person applies for FITAP, they may be required to participate in the Strategies to Empower People (STEP) Program.
4. How does a customer reach their caseworker with questions after the interview is complete?
- Step 1:** The customer must contact the DCFS Customer Service Center at 1-888-524-3578
- Step 2:** Pay attention to the prompts to properly dial through and reach a Customer Service Representative (CSR). Ask questions here in case the CSR can assist.  
\*To identify the case and caseworker customer should be ready with:
- a. Social Security Number
  - b. Case Identification number (CID)
  - c. All three of: full name, date of birth and CAFÉ application number
- Step 3:** If case-specific attention is needed, customer should request a call from the caseworker.
- Give the caseworker 2 business days to return the call and pay attention to the designated phone number, give additional contact numbers as reasonable (ex: cell, work, home).

- If customer will be busy frequently during the next two days, they should consider assigning an authorized representative (AR) for the case that might be more available to receive calls.

- Ensure:**
1. Voicemail is set-up,
  2. The mail box is not full, and
  3. Customer's voicemail message identifies the customer by name so the caseworker can leave appropriate information.

**Step 4:** Return messages and missed calls as needed.

**No Response?:** If there are no messages or missed calls in 2 business days' time, please have customer call again and request a call back from either the caseworker or the caseworker's supervisor. This will automatically alert the supervisor. **\*\*If there is still no response after 2 more business days, please contact your DCFS Community Partner liaison.\*\***

5. What happens to the information that is provided by the applicant?
  - Information given on the application form is verified by federal, state, and local offices including cross-matching with other agencies. Someone from the agency may contact other people in order to verify eligibility for benefits.
  - The alien status of household members may be subject to verification through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) and may affect eligibility and benefit amount.
6. Why does DCFS need Social Security Numbers (SSN) and is a person required to provide one?
  - The collection of information requested on the application form, including SSN of household members, is voluntary and authorized under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, (7 U.S.C. 2011-2036), as amended. Failure to provide required information including SSNs or proof of application for an SSN for household members may result in ineligibility for SNAP and cash assistance.
  - SSNs are used to:
    - Collect information from other sources,
    - Check identity of household members,
    - Determine whether a household is eligible, and
    - Prevent households from getting more benefits than they are entitled to receive.
  - SSNs are used in state and federal program reviews, audits, and computer-matching with other agencies such as Louisiana Workforce Commission, Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service, etc., through the State Income and Eligibility Verification System (SIEVS).
  - Under the Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579), SSNs may be released for various reasons including those directly connected to the administration of the Child Support Enforcement Program.

### Rights and Responsibilities

When a person receives benefits from DCFS, they have certain rights and responsibilities that are explained below.

7. What are their rights?

- Non-Discrimination – In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Under the Food and Nutrition Act and USDA policy, discrimination is also prohibited on the basis of religion or political beliefs.
- Fair Hearing – If a person does not agree with any decision made on their case, they have the right to ask their case be reviewed. They can tell us they want a fair hearing in writing, in person, or by calling the office. They have the right to look at the case before the hearing.
- Confidentiality – All the information provided is confidential. This means that information about an individual's case cannot be given to other people except under special conditions. Examples of those conditions include official review by other State and Federal agencies or Federal, State and private collection agencies for the collection of claims against SNAP benefits. Information from the case may also be given to law enforcement officials for the purpose of catching persons fleeing to avoid the law and for investigation of a felony or probation/parole violation.

8. What are their responsibilities?

- Cooperation – A person applying for benefits must cooperate by providing the information needed to determine eligibility for benefits for themselves and other for whom they are applying. They also have to provide proof of the information they report. They will be expected to cooperate if a home visit is necessary to determine their eligibility. If their case is selected for a quality control review by state or federal reviewers, they have to cooperate with quality control staff.
- Report changes – Certain changes must be reported by households receiving SNAP, FITAP, post FITAP and KCSP benefits. A DCFS employee will explain the reporting requirements for changes.

Penalties

If an individual knowingly reports incorrect information, the SNAP benefits, or cash assistance may be denied, reduced, or ended and they may be subject to criminal prosecution.

9. What penalties apply in the SNAP Program?

<b>If an individual does the following:</b>	<b>The individual will:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hide information or give false information</li> <li>• Trade or sell SNAP benefits or EBT cards</li> <li>• Use SNAP benefits to buy ineligible items, such as alcohol or tobacco</li> <li>• Use someone else's SNAP benefits</li> <li>• Pay for food purchased on credit with SNAP benefits</li> </ul>	<p>Lose SNAP benefits for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 year for the first violation</li> <li>• 2 years for the second violation</li> <li>• Permanently for the third violation</li> </ul> <p>The individual may also be fined up to \$250,000 or imprisoned for up to 20 years or both.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trade SNAP benefits for illegal drugs</li> </ul>	<p>Lose SNAP benefits for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 years for the first violation</li> <li>• Permanently for the second violation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trade SNAP benefits for firearms, ammunition, or explosives</li> <li>• Trade, buy, or sell SNAP benefits of \$500 or more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lose SNAP benefits permanently</li> </ul>

DCFS Community Partner Manual

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give false information about who they are or where they live in order to receive benefits in more than one case at the same time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lose SNAP benefits for 10 years</li> </ul>
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10. What penalties apply in FITAP and KCSP?

<b>If an individual does the following:</b>	<b>The individual will:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hide information or give false information</li> </ul>	<p>Lose benefits for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 year for the first violation</li> <li>2 years for the second violation</li> <li>Permanently for the third violation</li> </ul> <p>The individual may also be fined up to \$50,000 or imprisoned for up to 20 years or both.</p>
<p>Uses their EBT card:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in a liquor store,</li> <li>in a gambling casino or gaming establishment</li> <li>in a retail establishment that provides adult entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment purposes,</li> <li>at any adult bookstore, any adult paraphernalia store, or any sexually oriented business,</li> <li>at any tattoo, piercing, or commercial body art facility,</li> <li>at any nail salon,</li> <li>at any jewelry store,</li> <li>at any amusement or video arcade,</li> <li>at any bail bonds company,</li> <li>at any night club, bar, tavern, or saloon,</li> <li>on any cruise ship,</li> <li>at any psychic business; or</li> <li>at any establishment where persons under age 18 are not permitted, or</li> <li>at an ATM in any of these establishments.</li> </ul> <p>Uses their EBT card:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at any retailer for the purchase of an alcoholic beverage,</li> <li>at any retailer for the purchase of tobacco products, or</li> <li>at any retailer for the purchase of lottery tickets,</li> <li>at any retailer for the purchase of jewelry.</li> </ul>	<p>Lose SNAP benefits for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 year for the first violation</li> <li>2 years for the second violation</li> <li>Permanently for the third violation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give false information about where they live in order to receive benefits in two or more states at the same time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lose benefits for 10 years</li> </ul>

#### 11. How are benefits delivered to an eligible individual?

Benefits are delivered electronically by Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT). EBT utilizes a plastic card that works much like a bank debit card. The EBT card enables the recipient to access benefits at Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) and Point-of-Sale (POS) devices. EBT provides an efficient, convenient, reliable and secure method of providing benefit access to recipients.

Weekends and holidays do not affect when a recipient receives benefits. Eligible recipients' monthly benefits are posted to their accounts during the first five days of the month for cash assistance and during the first 23 days of the month for SNAP benefits. Food purchases are debited electronically at grocery store checkout lanes. Cash withdrawals may be made at ATMs or grocery stores that opt to participate as a cash provider.

Recipients may obtain EBT account assistance/information by contacting the Customer Service Help Desk 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The toll-free number for Customer Service is 1-888-997-1117. Assistance is available through the Audio Response Unit (ARU) or a Customer Service Representative (CSR). The Customer Service number is printed on the back of the EBT card.

It is recommended that this EBT customer service number be posted in the office window as well as in the office lobby.

Recipients should use the EBT Customer Service number to:

- Report a lost or stolen card
- Report a card not functioning
- Select or change a PIN
- Check the balance in their account(s)
- Review past transactions or request a transaction history report
- File a claim reporting a POS or ATM discrepancy/overcharge
- Ask questions regarding the Louisiana Purchase Card that do not relate to eligibility.

Recipients may also obtain information regarding their accounts via the internet at <https://la-ch.lifeincheckebt.com/>

Recipients should be encouraged to call the Customer Service toll free number (1-888-997-1117) to deactivate a lost or stolen EBT card.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Executive Bulletin E-2414-00**  
**Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – Language Line**

<b>Agency Name</b>	Office of Family Support (OFS)				
<b>Chapter No./Name</b>	00. Miscellaneous Issuances Manual				
<b>Part No./Name</b>	E. Executive Bulletins				
<b>Section No./Name</b>	E-2400 Executive Bulletins				
<b>Document No./Name</b>	E-2414-00 Limited English Proficiency – Language Line				
<b>Dates</b>	<b>Issue</b>	May 14, 2010	May 14, 2010	<b>Effective</b>	<b>August 1, 2013</b>

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has a responsibility to provide Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons with meaningful access to the programs and services of our agency. This is required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 7 CFR 272.4(b).

When working with the general public who are not proficient in the use of the English language, foreign language interpreters should be used when there are no agency personnel available who can interpret the required foreign language.

For immediate access to foreign language interpreters, the agency has contracted with Language Line Services. This service allows staff to communicate with the LEP public in more than 170 languages.

- To utilize this service, call **1-877-245-0386**.
- DCFS Client ID number is: **505091**.

Each office has been given an access code which must be utilized when using Language Line services. Access codes are listed by parish on the following page. Please use the parish code based on the applicant's parish of residence, even if the application was taken or processed in another parish.

There are three ways that these services can be utilized:

### 1) Receiving a Call from a Limited English Speaker

- Place the Limited English speaker on hold.
- Dial the Language Line Services toll-free number.
- Input the DCFS Client ID and access code for your parish.
- Request the language spoken by the caller using their interactive voice response system.
- When the interpreter is connected, explain the situation, such as interviewing a person for SNAP eligibility or requesting additional information from a client.
- Conference with your limited English speaking caller.

### 2) Making a Call to a Limited English Speaker

- Dial the Language Line Services designated toll-free number.
- Input the DCFS Client ID and access code for your parish.
- Request the language spoken by your client through the interactive voice response system
- When the interpreter is connected, explain the situation, such as interviewing a person for SNAP eligibility or requesting additional information from a client.
  - Call your limited English-speaking client.
  - Or, the interpreter can place the call for you within the U.S.

### 3) Face-to-Face with a Limited English Speaker

- Dial the Language Line Services designated toll-free number.
- Input the DCFS Client ID and access code for your parish.
- Request the language spoken by your client through the interactive voice response system.
- When the interpreter is connected, use your speaker phone or pass the handset back and forth.

**IMPORTANT TIPS:**

**UNKNOWN LANGUAGE** – If you do not know which language to request, press “0” and the Language Line representative will help you.

**LINE QUALITY PROBLEMS** – If there is a sound quality problem, ask the Language Line representative to stay on the line to check for sound quality. If you have problems connecting to an Interpreter, call Customer Service at 1-800-752-6096.

**WORKING WITH AN INTERPRETER** – Give the Interpreter specific questions to relay. Group your thoughts or questions to help conversation flow quickly.

- YOU are in charge of the conversation. YOU take the lead.
- Speak in the first person (i.e. what is your name) instead of third person (i.e. interpreter, please ask the LEP what her name is). Speaking in the first person will make the call more effective and efficient.
- Avoid long, complex sentences, and do not use slang, jargon, or colloquial expressions.

**LENGTH OF CALL** – Expect interpreted comments to run a bit longer than English phrases. Interpreters convey meaning for- meaning, not word-for-word. Concepts familiar to English speakers often require explanation or elaboration in other languages and cultures.

**INTERPRETER IDENTIFICATION** – Language Line Interpreters identify themselves by first name and number only. For reasons of confidentiality, they do not divulge either their full names or phone number.

**DEMONSTRATION LINE** – To hear a recorded demonstration of over-the-phone interpretation, call our demonstration line at 1-800-996-8808 or visit their website at [www.LanguageLine.com](http://www.LanguageLine.com)

**CUSTOMER SERVICE** – To provide feedback, commend an Interpreter, or report any service concerns, call Customer Service at 1-800-752-6096.

**PARISH ACCESS CODES**

PARISH	ACCESS CODE				
Acadia	10501	Iberia	10523	St. Helena	10346
Allen	10602	Iberville	10224	St. James	10447
Ascension	10403	Jackson	10825	St. John	10448
Assumption	10404	Jefferson-West	10126	St. Landry	10549
Avoyelles	10705	Jefferson Davis	10627	St. Martin	10550
Beauregard	10606	Lafayette	10528	St. Mary	10551
Bienville	10807	Lafourche	10429	St. Tammany	10352
Bossier	10808	LaSalle	10730	Tangipahoa	10353
Caddo	10809	Lincoln	10931	Tensas	10954
Calcasieu	10610	Livingston	10332	Terrebonne	10455
Caldwell	10911	Madison	10933	Union	10956
Cameron	10612	Morehouse	10934	Vermilion	10557
Catahoula	10713	Natchitoches	10835	Vernon	10758
Claiborne	10814	Orleans-Midtown	10136	Washington	10359
Concordia	10715	Ouachita	10937	Webster	10860
DeSoto	10816	Plaquemines	10138	W. Baton Rouge	10261
EBR	10297	Pointe Coupee	10239	West Carroll	10962
E. Carroll	10918	Rapides	10740	West Feliciana	10263
E. Feliciana	10219	Red River	10841	Winn	10764
Evangeline	10520	Richland	10942	Jefferson-East	10165
Franklin	10921	Sabine-Many	10843	Sabine-Zwolle	10893
Grant	10722	St. Bernard	10144	DCFS STATE Ofc	10299
		St. Charles	10445		



**LANGUAGES OFFERED\*:**

Acholi	Chin Falam	German	Kannada
Afar	Chin Hakha	Gheg	Karen
Afrikaans	Chin Mara	Gokana	Kashmiri
Akan	Chin Matu	Greek	Kayah
Akateko	Chin Senthang	Gujarati	Kazakh
Albanian	Chin Tedim	Gulay	Kham
Amharic	Chipewyan	Gurani	Khana
Anuak	Chuukese	Haitian Creole	Khmer
Apache	Cree	Hakka-China	K'iché
Arabic	Croatian	Hakka-Taiwan	Kikuyu
Armenian	Czech	Hassaniyya	Kimiiru
Assyrian	Danish	Hausa	Koho
Azerbaijani	Dari	Hebrew	Korean
Bahasa	Dewoin	Hiligaynon	Kpelle
Bahdini	Dinka	Hindi	Krahn
Bahnar	Duala	Hindko	Krio
Bajuni	Dutch	Hmong	Kunama
Bambara	Dzongkha	Hunanese	Kurmanji
Bantu	Edo	Hungarian	Laotian
Barese	Estonian	Ibanag	Latvian
Basque	Ewe	Icelandic	Liberian Pidgin English
Bassa	Farsi	Igbo	Lingala
Behdini	Fijian	Ilocano	Lithuanian
Belorussian	Fijian Hindi	Indonesian	Luba-Kasai
Bemba	Finnish	Inuktitut	Luganda
Benaadir	Flemish	Italian	Luo
Bengali	French	Jakartanese	Maay
Berber	French Canadian	Jamaican Patois	Macedonian
Bosnian	Fukienese	Japanese	Malay
Bravanese	Fulani	Jarai	Malayalam
Bulgarian	Fuzhou	Javanese	Maltese
Burmese	Ga	Jingpho	Mam
Cantonese	Gaddang	Jinyu	Mandarin
Catalan	Gaelic-Irish	Juba Arabic	Mandinka
Cebuano	Gaelic-Scottish	Jula	Maninka
Chaldean	Garre	Kaba	Manobo
Chamorro	Gen	Kamba	Marathi
Chaochow	Georgian	Kanjobal	Marka

DCFS Community Partner Manual
 

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Marshallese	Plautdietsch	Sichuan Yi	Tongan
Mbay	Pohnpeian	Sicilian	Tooro
Mien	Polish	Sinhala	Trique
Mirpuri	Portuguese	Slovak	Turkish
Mixteco	Portuguese, Brazilian	Slovene	Turkmen
Mizo	Portuguese, Cape	Soga	Tzotzil
Mnong	Verdean	Somali	Ukrainian
Mongolian	Pugliese	Soninke	Urdu
Moroccan Arabic	Pulaar	Sorani	Uyghur
Mortlockese	Punjabi	Spanish	Uzbek
Napoletano	Putian	Sudanese Arabic	Vietnamese
Navajo	Quechua	Sunda	Visayan
Nepali	Quichua	Susu	Welsh
Ngambay	Rade	Swahili	Wodaabe
Nigerian Pidgin	Rakhine	Swedish	Wolof
Norwegian	Rohingya	Sylhetti	Wuzhou
Nuer	Romanian	Tagalog	Yemeni Arabic
Nupe	Rundi	Taiwanese	Yiddish
Nyanja	Russian	Tajik	Yoruba
Nyoro	Rwanda	Tamil	Yunnanese
Ojibway	Samoan	Teluga	Zapoteco
Oromo	Sango	Thai	Zarma
Palauan	Seraiki	Tibetan	Zyphe
Pampangan	Serbian	Tigré	
Papiamento	Shanghainese	Tigrigna	
Pashto	Shona	Toishanese	

\*Additional languages and dialects may be available. Rare languages may require additional interpreter connect time or may require an appointment.