

**Louisiana Department of Social Services
Office of Family Support
Information about the Application for Assistance**

What kind of assistance does the Office of Family Support offer?

- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) – Provides assistance to families to help pay for the child care needed in order to work, look for work, attend school or training.
- Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP) – Provides temporary cash assistance to eligible low-income families who need assistance for children. FITAP recipients also receive Medicaid benefits through the Department of Health and Hospitals.
- Food Stamp Program – Provides monthly benefits that help low-income households buy the food they need for good health.
- Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP) – Provides cash assistance for eligible children who reside with qualified relatives other than parents. KCSP recipients also receive Medicaid benefits through the Department of Health and Hospitals.
- Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) – Provides medical assistance to refugees who have lived in the U. S. for less than eight months from their initial date of entry.
- For more information about programs and services or for specific information about your case, call 1-888-LAHELPU (1-888-524-3578).

How do you apply for assistance?

- Complete the Application for Assistance, form OFS 4APP.
- Return the completed form to any parish/district Office of Family Support Family Assistance office.
- One form may be used to apply for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP), Food Stamp Program, Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP), and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA).
- You may file a separate application for Food Stamps. Whether you file a Food Stamp application with another program or separately, your Food Stamp application will be processed according to the same Food Stamp procedures, including timeliness, notice, and fair hearing requirements.
- If you file an application for Food Stamps jointly with another program and are denied benefits from the other program, you do not have to turn in another application for Food Stamps. You may not be denied Food Stamp benefits just because you may not be eligible for benefits from another program.
- We will determine your eligibility for all programs for which you apply.
- You need to be interviewed if you are applying for FITAP, Food Stamps, KCSP, or RMA.
- You do not need to be interviewed if you are only applying for CCAP.
- You need to provide verification to the parish/district Office of Family Support Family Assistance office where you apply. Verification is explained below.

If you are applying for:	Complete these pages							
	A1	1-7	8	9	10	11	12-13	14
CCAP		√		√		√		√
FITAP		√	√	√	√		√	√
Food Stamps	√	√	√	√	√			√
KCSP		√	√	√	√		√	√
RMA		√	√	√	√		√	√

Do you need help completing the application form?

- You may ask someone to help you fill out the form, or
- You may ask the worker during your interview to help you fill out the form.

What happens after we receive your application form?

- You will be assigned a worker.
- You will be interviewed, if you are applying for FITAP, Food Stamps, KCSP, or RMA.
- Your worker will give you a list of verification that is required.
- Your worker will determine your eligibility.
- You will receive a letter that will tell you if you are eligible or not. If you are eligible, the letter will also tell you the amount of your benefits. If you are eligible, benefits will be paid back to the date of your application.
- If you applied for CCAP and are determined eligible, you will receive a certificate for each child who needs care. You must have the certificate completed by your child care provider and return the certificate by the due date given.
- If you applied for FITAP, you may be required to participate in the Strategies to Empower People (STEP) Program. The STEP Program provides opportunities for work-eligible FITAP families to receive job training, employment, and supportive services to enable them to become self-sufficient.

What will we do with the information that you provide?

- Information you give us on your application form 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.
- 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.

Why do we need your Social Security Number and are you required to provide it?

- The collection of information requested on the application form, including Social Security Numbers (SSNs) of household members, is voluntary and authorized under the Food Stamp Act of 1977, (7 U.S.C. 2011-2036), as amended. Failure to provide required information including SSNs for household members will result in ineligibility for Food Stamps and cash assistance.
- SSNs are not required for Child Care Assistance eligibility and eligibility cannot be denied for failure to provide SSNs.
- SSNs 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 receive.
- SSNs are used in state and federal program reviews, audits, and computer-matching with other agencies such as Louisiana Department of Labor, Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service, etc., through the State Income and Eligibility Verification System.
- 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.

What type of verification do you need to provide?

Verification means proof of the information you report. The following table lists the information that must be verified by each program and the examples of the proof that is required. Let your worker know if you have any questions about what you must provide or if you need help in getting the proof. It is our responsibility to help you get the proof that you need.

What Must be Verified and Examples of Proof	Food Stamps	FITAP (Cash)	KCSP (Cash)	Child Care	RMA
Identity – 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	√				
Age/Relationship - 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		√	√	√	
Social Security Number - copy of the social security card or papers you received at the hospital for a newborn	√	√	√	√	√
Alien status - if not a U.S. citizen, forms or cards from USCIS that prove the person is a legal alien	√	√	√	√	√
Wages - last 4 pay check stubs or employer's statement for each person who works	√	√	√	√	√
Self-employment - income tax returns, sales records, quarterly tax records, personal wage record	√	√	√	√	√
Other income such as contributions, child support, alimony, Social Security, SSI, VA, retirement checks, Unemployment Compensation (UCB) - award letters, court orders, statements from contributors	√	√	√	√	√
Income that stopped within the last 3 months – pink slip, termination notice, or statement from former employer, termination notice or statement from source of any income that ended	√	√	√	√	
Housing expenses - rent receipts, mortgage papers, homeowners insurance papers, and property tax papers	√				
Dependent care expenses - receipts or statements from the dependent care provider	√	√		√	
Medical expenses - 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	√				
Child support payments made to someone outside your home - court order or other legal papers and proof that you are making payments such as cancelled checks or wage withholding statements	√				
Immunization - shot, school, or doctor's records		√	√	√	
Resources – current bank statements, papers that prove ownership and value of property that you own (other than where you live), papers for any other type of resource such as stocks, bonds, certificates of deposit, etc.	√	√			√
Legal custody - court order or other legal papers			√		
Home - 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		√	√		
Job Search – a written statement, signed by the person who needs child care to look for work, indicating the number of hours each week he will actively look for work				√	
School Attendance or Job Training – a statement from the school or job training program indicating the number of hours of the attendance each week and anticipated date of completion for any person who needs child care in order to attend school or job training				√	

Rights and Responsibilities

When you receive benefits from the Louisiana Department of Social Services, you have certain rights and responsibilities that are explained below. Keep this important information for future reference.

What are your 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 Stamp Act and USDA policy, discrimination is also prohibited on the basis of religion or political beliefs.

To file a complaint of discrimination, contact USDA or HHS.

To contact USDA: Write: USDA, Director Office of Civil Rights Room 326-W, Whitten Building 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 Call: 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD)	To contact HHS: Write: HHS, Director Office for Civil Rights Room 506-F 200 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20201 Call: 202-619-0403 (voice) or 202-619-3257 (TDD)
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USDA and HHS are equal opportunity providers and employers.

- **Fair Hearing** - If you do not agree with any decision made on your case, you have the right to ask that your case be reviewed. You can tell us that you want a fair hearing in writing, in person, or by calling this office. You have the right to look at your case record before the hearing.
- **Confidentiality** – All the information you give us is confidential. This means that we cannot give information about your case 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 Food Stamp benefits. Information from your 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.

What are 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.
- **Report changes** - If your case is assigned to Semi-Annual Reporting (SAR), you have to report if your household's monthly income increases to more than the Food Stamp gross income limit for your household size. This includes reporting the income of a person who moves into your home if that person's income combined with your Food Stamp household's income is more than the gross income limit for your household. In addition, if you are in SAR and receiving:
 - **FITAP** - You have to:
 - Follow the reporting requirements explained in your Family Success Agreement.
 - 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.
- Post-FITAP benefits - You have to report within 10 days if you stop working.
- CCAP - You have to report within 10 days if:
 - Employment, training or education of any parent or adult household member ends or is interrupted for at least 3 weeks.
 - You change child care providers.
 - A child who receives child care benefits moves out of your home.
 - Job search ends.

If you are **not** in SAR, **and** receiving:

- Food Stamps, FITAP, KCSP, or CCAP - 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 \$50 per month.
 - The amount of your household's earned income changes by more than \$100 per month.
 - The value of your household's resources changes. This includes things such as cash, stocks, bonds, or money in a checking or savings account.
 - Someone moves into or out of your household.
 - You move. If you are receiving Food Stamps, you must also report your housing expenses when you move.
- Food Stamps - In addition to the changes listed above, if anyone in your household pays court-ordered child support, you have to report within 10 days if the amount of the court order changes.
- 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.
- CCAP - In addition to the changes listed above, you have to report within 10 days if:
 - Employment, training or education of any parent or adult household member ends or is interrupted for at least 3 weeks.
 - Marital status of anyone in your household changes.
 - There is a change in the number of hours worked by any parent or adult household member.
 - You change child care providers or there is a change in the place where care is provided.
 - School attendance or attendance in training classes changes for a parent or other adult household member.
 - The number of days or hours that children are in child care changes.
 - A child receiving child care assistance is absent from care for 5 or more consecutive days.
 - You or anyone in your household has a disability that ends or begins.
 - Job search ends.

- **Pay co-payments** - If you receive CCAP, you have to pay the child care provider the difference between what we pay through CCAP and the amount the provider charges. This is called a co-payment. If you do not keep up-to-date with your co-payments, your CCAP case may be closed. Keep your receipts when you pay the child care provider because we may ask you to prove that you are up-to-date with your co-payments.

Penalties

If you knowingly report incorrect information, your Food Stamp benefits, cash assistance, or Child Care Assistance may be denied, reduced, or ended and you may be subject to criminal prosecution.

What penalties apply in the Food Stamp Program?

If you do the following:	You will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hide information or give false information • Trade or sell Food Stamp benefits or EBT cards • Use Food Stamp benefits to buy ineligible items, such as alcohol or tobacco • Use someone else's Food Stamp benefits 	Lose your Food Stamp benefits for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 year for the first violation • 2 years for the second violation • Permanently for the third violation You may also be fined up to \$20,000 or imprisoned for up to 5 years or both.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade Food Stamp benefits for illegal drugs 	Lose your Food Stamp benefits for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 years for the first violation • Permanently for the second violation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade Food Stamp benefits for firearms, ammunition, or explosives • Trade, buy, or sell Food Stamp benefits of \$500 or more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lose your Food Stamp benefits permanently
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give false information about who you are or where you live in order to receive benefits in more than one case at the same time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lose your Food Stamp benefits for 10 years.

What penalties apply in FITAP and KCSP?

If you do the following:	You will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hide information or give false information 	Lose your benefits for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 months for the first violation • 1 year for the second violation • Permanently for the third violation You may also be fined up to \$20,000 or imprisoned for up to 5 years or both.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give false information about where you live in order to receive benefits in two or more states at the same time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lose your benefits for 10 years.

What penalties apply in CCAP?

If you do the following:	You will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hide information or give false information 	Lose your benefits for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 months for the first violation • 1 year for the second violation • 2 years for the third violation