NEWSROOM

DSNAP Approved for 16 Louisiana Parishes

Virtual Application Process Rolling Out in Phases, Starting September 10th

September 08, 2020

BATON ROUGE (Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2020) - The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) received approval today to begin virtual Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (DSNAP) operations in sixteen parishes to provide additional food aid to families impacted by Hurricane Laura. The program will run in phases, with the first phase beginning Thursday, Sept. 10.

DSNAP, formerly called Disaster Food Stamps, provides food assistance to eligible households who do **not** receive regular SNAP benefits and who need help buying groceries due to lost income or damages following a disaster. The state must request that the federal government initiate DSNAP, but can only make the request after the president activates the Stafford Act and approves the parish for Individual Assistance (IA). Each IA-approved parish must also request DSNAP before the benefits can be provided to eligible residents of that parish.

The 16 parishes that have been approved for IA and have requested DSNAP are Acadia, Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Grant, Jackson, Jefferson Davis, Lincoln, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Rapides, Sabine, Vermilion, Vernon and Winn.

DSNAP will operate in the approved parishes in two phases, with Phase 1 beginning Sept. 10 for nine parishes and Phase 2 beginning Sept. 17 for seven parishes. If additional parishes are approved for IA and request DSNAP, DCFS will add a third phase of DSNAP beginning Sept. 23. ***For a complete schedule, see below.***

SNAP recipients are not eligible for DSNAP and should not apply. Information about SNAP benefits changes related to Hurricane Laura, including replacement benefits for food lost due to power outages, can be found at www.dcfs.la.gov/SNAPLaura.

What Applicants Need to Know

Due to concerns related to the coronavirus pandemic, DSNAP applications will be handled by phone, and benefits cards will be mailed or sent through FedEx to approved applicants.

Residents in the approved parishes for each phase will be assigned a day, based on the first letter of their last name, to call the LAHelpU Customer Service Center to apply for DSNAP. On their designated day, residents will call 1-888-LA-HELP-U (1-888-524-3578), between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Translation services are available for individuals whose primary language is not English.

DCFS is anticipating significant interest in the DSNAP program. Three steps residents can take before calling to apply that will help reduce call wait times are:

- **Register online first.** Step-by-step instructions for this can be found at www.dcfs.la.gov/DSNAP.
- **Download the LA Wallet mobile app for identity and residency verification.** Information on the app, including download links, can be found at LAWallet.com.
- **Gather all information needed for the application.** A list of what is needed can be found in the FAQs at www.dcfs.la.gov/DSNAP.

When residents call to apply, a worker will verify the applicant's identity and residency, and obtain information about their income, resources and disaster-related expenses. Applicants will be told on the phone immediately after completing their application whether they have been approved to receive DSNAP and, if so, the amount of benefits they will receive. Applicants also will receive a letter by mail, confirming the eligibility decision made on their application.

Applicants may name an Authorized Representative (AR) to apply for DSNAP benefits on their behalf. The head of household must authorize the person to serve as AR on their behalf, and the worker will need to speak to the head of household to confirm that they agree for the AR to speak on their behalf.

Application Schedule

Phase 1: Acadia, Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis, Rapides, Vermilion and Vernon Parishes

Application period opens on Thursday, Sept. 10, with residents calling to apply according to the following schedule:

- Day 1 (Sept. 10) – Residents with last names beginning with A-C
- Day 2 (Sept. 11) – D-G
- Day 3 (Sept. 12) – H-L
- Day 4 (Sept. 13) – M-R
- Day 5 (Sept. 14) – S-Z
- Day 6 & 7 (Sept. 15-16) – Open for all (letters A-Z) in the Phase 1 parishes

Phase 2: Grant, Jackson, Lincoln, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Sabine and Winn Parishes

Application period opens on Thursday, Sept. 17, with residents calling to apply according to the following schedule:

- Day 1 (Sept. 17) – Residents with last names beginning with A-C
- Day 2 (Sept. 18) – D-G
- Day 3 (Sept. 19) – H-L
- Day 4 (Sept. 20) – M-R
- Day 5 (Sept. 21) – S-Z
- Days 6 & 7 (Sept. 22-23) – Open for all (letters A-Z) in the Phase 2 parishes

Additional information about DSNAP can be found by texting LADSNAP to 898-211 or at www.dcfs.la.gov/DSNAP.

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SNAP Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027) found online at: How to File a Complaint, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. *Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;*
2. *Fax: (202) 690-7442; or*
3. *Email: program.intake@usda.gov.*

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DCFS OFFICE LOCATOR

CUSTOMER SERVICE

LAHelpU.dcfs@la.gov 1-888-524-3578 1-844-224-6188 TTY 1-888-997-1117 EBT Card M - F, 7:30 am - 6:00 pm

REPORT CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

1-855-452-5437