NEWSROOM

DCFS Offices Instituting Remote Work Starting Today

Call Lines, Services Still Available, including Food Assistance Application Online

March 16, 2020

BATON ROUGE - Due to community spread of the novel coronavirus in New Orleans, and in response to the need for social distancing across the state, the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is instituting 100% remote work in its Orleans Region offices, and transitioning to reduced workforce on-site in other offices statewide, starting today (Monday, March 16, 2020).

How to connect with DCFS:

- To report child abuse, call Louisiana's child abuse hotline at 1-855-4LA-KIDS (1-855-452-5437), or for mandatory reporters, visit www.dcfs.la.gov/mandatedreporters.
- To access SNAP, FITAP, KCSP or Child Support, apply only via the CAFÉ Self-Service Portal (www.dcfs.la.gov/cafe) or get information about the services online at www.dcfs.la.gov/page/family-support or by calling the LAHelpU Customer Service Center at 1-888-LA-HELP-U (1-888-524-3578).
- Those specifically looking for a SNAP application can text GETSNAP (no spaces) to 898211, email LAHelpU.DCFS@la.gov or call 1-888-LA-HELP-U (1-888-524-3578).

“We will be working every way we can, including remotely whenever possible, and will continue to serve the children and families of this state throughout this event,” DCFS Secretary Marketa Garner Walters said.

No D-SNAP, "GetSNAP"

At this time, the federal government has **not** authorized emergency/disaster SNAP benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. However, anyone who is not already a SNAP recipient and has a food need is encouraged to apply for regular SNAP benefits.

For information about SNAP or an application, Louisiana residents can text GETSNAP (no spaces) to 898211, email LAHelpU.DCFS@la.gov or call 1-888-LA-HELP-U (1-888-524-3578).

“We believe more people may be eligible for SNAP benefits due to many being off work during this time, and we want to make sure they know what food assistance is available and how they can apply,” Walters said. “The good news is that services for most of our clients can be handled online, making it unnecessary to go to an office in most cases, including applying for benefits. The application process can be done without coming into an office, either by applying online or by mailing or faxing a paper application.”

For more information, visit **www.dcfs.la.gov/getSNAP**. DCFS will continue to provide updates through its website, Facebook page and news releases, as appropriate.

Customer Service Center hours for the LAHelpU call line are Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

National Disaster Distress Helpline

Feeling stressed, anxious or depressed is common among human service clients, staff and children during emergencies. The Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990, is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline that provides immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any emergency. This toll-free, multilingual and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the U.S. and its territories. www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline

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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