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PRESS RELEASE**DSS Implements Emergency Rules to Assist Louisiana's Coastal Families Affected by Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill****Rule will exclude business accounts, payments from BP as countable income**

BATON ROUGE (May 12, 2010) - In an effort to aid fishermen and shrimpers affected by the oil spill, the Louisiana Department of Social Services (DSS) issued an emergency rule today revising what income and assets can be counted to determine eligibility for the regular Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, and other cash-based aid.

The rule, which applies statewide, is designed to target the needs of coastal residents impacted by the Gulf of Mexico oil spill who may have recently lost income, but have assets that put them over the limit to receive aid.

"This rule will help many recently unemployed fishermen and others who worked in the seafood industry and have modest savings," said DSS Secretary Kristy Nichols. "Current rules would have required these citizens to liquidate their savings before they could receive assistance, a move which would undermine their long-term financial stability."

The emergency rule implements broad-based categorical eligibility for SNAP that will exclude many resources from eligibility determinations, including all payments other than wages received as a result of the incident.

Under the emergency rule, resources like business accounts and lump sum insurance payments received from British Petroleum would not be counted as assets or income.

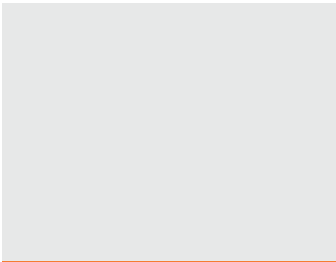
The rule also applies to the Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP), the Kinship Care Subsidy Payment (KCSP) and the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).

The rule became effective today upon Secretary Nichol's signature today.

The emergency rule was developed with the help and guidance of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), after the USDA was not able to approve the state's request for four waivers for the SNAP program. Approving these waivers would require the President to declare a major disaster and enact the Stafford Act.

"This emergency rule addresses the most critical of those denied waivers, the eligibility requirements," said Nichols. "I would like to thank the USDA for their support in ensuring that impacted families are not deprived of needed assistance that will help put food on tables."

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