Louisiana’s Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) State Plan

Louisiana Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) State Plan

Table of Contents

Part A. Introduction to TANF State Plan

A-100 Introduction

PART B. Program Eligibility for Cash Assistance Programs

B-100 Families
B-200 Minor Parents
B-300 Excluded Person
B-400 Standard Filing Unit
B-500 Residency
B-600 Citizenship Status
B-610 Citizenship Status
B-620 Qualified Aliens Entering the U.S. On or After August 22, 1996
B-700 Felons
B-800 Resources
B-900 Income Eligibility
B-1000 Child Support Requirement
B-1100 Personal Responsibility
B-1110 Family Success Agreement
B-1200 Time Limits
B-1300 Other Eligibility Factors
B-1400 Reporting Requirements
B-1500 Application Disposition and Initial Date of Eligibility

PART C. Work and Self-Sufficiency

C-100 Strategies to Empower People (STEP) Program
C-110 Overview
C-120 Work Activities
C-130 Temporary Exceptions
C-140 Family Assessment
C-150 Job Readiness
C-160 Comprehensive Assessment
C-170 Family Success Agreement
C-180 Family Transition Assessment
C-200 Supportive Services
C-300 Community Services Option

PART D. Sanctions

D-100 Sanctions
D-110 Sanctions
D-120 Sanction Periods
D-130 Good Cause

PART E. Client Rights

E-100 Client Notification
E-200 Right to Appeal
E-300 Confidentiality
E-400 Interpretive Services

PART F. Additional Program Provisions

F-100 Benefit Delivery
F-200 Statewide Program Uniformity
F-300 Customer Service
F-400 Child Support Enforcement
F-500 Tribes
F-600 Parental Responsibility
F-700 Waivers
F-800 State Options
F-900 Administration

PART G. Additional Uses of TANF Block Grant Funds and State Maintenance of Effort Funds

G-100 TANF Initiatives
G-110 TANF Initiatives Overview

G-200 TANF Initiatives Programs

G-201 Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development
G-202 Alternatives to Abortion
G-203 Family Violence Prevention and Intervention Program
G-204 Court-Appointed Special Advocates
G-205 Drug Courts Program
G-207 Jobs for America's Graduates Louisiana (JAG-LA) Program
G-208 Child Welfare Programs
G-209 Individual Development Account Program
G-210 Early Childhood Supports and Services
G-211 Substance Abuse Treatment Program
G-212 Community Supervision Program (CSP)

G-213 Early Childhood Education and Parenting
G-214 Homeless Initiative
G-215 Micro-Enterprise Development Program
G-216 Nurse Family Partnership Program
G-217 LA 4 Public Pre-Kindergarten Program
G-218 Louisiana Go Grants
G-219 State Earned Income Tax Credit
G-220 Student Scholarships for Education Excellence Program
G-221 State Child Care Tax Credit

PART H. Federal Certifications and Assurances

H-100 Federal Certifications and Assurances

The Louisiana Temporary Assistance For Needy Families State Plan is submitted in accordance with Section 402 of the Social Security Act as revised by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 and the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

Act 58 of the 2003 Regular Session of the Louisiana State Legislature, also known as the Personal Responsibility and Universal Engagement Act, represents one of the most significant steps taken by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), formerly the Department of Social Services, to build a stronger Louisiana by improving its families. The act states that it is the objective of the Louisiana Legislature to ensure that all families are actively and universally engaged in work activities. It is the intent of this legislation that families in Louisiana are strong and economically self-reliant, therefore minimizing their dependence on government benefits for basic needs. It is further intended that cash assistance participants demonstrate and exercise active and diligent personal responsibility in achieving self-reliance through employment and increased workplace literacy.

Act 110 and Act 675 of the 2004 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature further amends and clarifies the language regarding STEP.

DCFS staff serves together to empower families to attain self-sufficiency and ongoing independence through strategic approaches, customer-focused policies and supportive services, simplified processes, and community-based solutions.

Needy families with, or expecting children, will be provided financial assistance and/or other services to include education, job preparation, work and support services under Louisiana's Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP), Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP), and Strategies to Empower People (STEP) Program. A needy family is defined as a family residing in the state who meets the eligibility requirements listed below for FITAP and KCSP respectively.

For FITAP eligibility a dependent child must be:

- under 18 years of age, or
- 18 years of age and enrolled in a secondary school or its equivalent.

For KCSP eligibility a dependent child must be under 18 years of age.

Unborn children are not eligible for FITAP. A pregnant woman who has completed the fifth month of pregnancy may be certified if otherwise eligible (unborn is not eligible).

To qualify for cash assistance, a child must reside in the home of a parent or other qualified relative who is responsible for the day-to-day care of the child. The following relatives are qualified relatives:

- 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);
- nephew or niece (extends to great-great);
- stepfather or stepmother;
- stepbrother or stepsister.

These may be either biological or adoptive relatives.

Unmarried parents under the age of 18 and their children living with them will be eligible for FITAP benefits only if residing with their parent, legal guardian or other adult relative, or in an adult supervised supportive living arrangement.

Families headed by unmarried parents under age 18 are exempt from the living arrangement requirement if the adult parents or guardians are deceased or their whereabouts are unknown; the adult parent or guardian will not allow the minor parent to live in their home; the minor parent has lived apart from a parent or legal guardian for at least one year before either the birth of the dependent child or the application for FITAP; the physical or emotional health or safety of the minor parent or dependent child would be jeopardized if living with the adult parent or legal guardian; or the minor has one of the following good causes to live apart from the parent or guardian:

- the adult is temporarily absent from the home;
- the parent or legal guardian lives out-of-state, is in an institution, or is addicted to drugs or alcohol;
- the minor's return to the parent's or legal guardian's home would violate their lease or local health or safety standards;
- the minor is in a licensed substance abuse treatment program which would not be available if returned to the parent's or legal guardian's home;
- the minor alleges that the home of the parent or legal guardian is the scene of illegal activity;
- the minor parent has been emancipated by court order;
- a court order has barred contact between the minor parent and the parent or legal guardian; or
- the parent or legal guardian did not provide adequate food, clothing, medical care, or other necessities for the minor parent or the child.

Certain family members must not be included in the FITAP certification as they have failed to comply with certain eligibility requirements or meet a certain status. Members excluded from the certification include:

- a child receiving either federal or state foster care payments;
- a child receiving benefits through the Kinship Care Subsidy Program;
- those receiving SSI or who are SSI-eligible with suspended payments,
- those not meeting citizenship requirements;
- those whose parental relationship have been terminated through adoption;
- those not meeting enumeration requirements;
- those convicted of misrepresentation of residence;
- those disqualified due to an intentional program violation;
- those convicted of a drug-related felony; and
- certain convicted offenders and persons who are fleeing felons or probation/parole violators.

The mandatory filing unit for FITAP shall contain at least one eligible child and the parents, including stepparents. All siblings residing in the home, including half siblings of children included in the assistance unit must be included in the assistance unit.

In the case of the child of a minor parent, the filing unit shall include the child, the minor parent, the minor parent's siblings, (including half and step siblings) and the parents of any children living in the home.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients and children receiving Kinship Care Subsidy Payments may not be included in the filing unit.

Families assisted by the Louisiana TANF Program must be residents of Louisiana. Louisiana residence is established by living in the state and having no current intent to leave.

Each recipient must be a United States Citizen, a non-citizen national (person born in an outlying possession of the United States [American Samoa or Swain's Island] on or after the date the U.S. acquired the possession, or a person whose parents are U.S. non-citizen nationals), or a qualified alien as defined below:

1. an alien who is lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act;

2. an alien who is granted asylum under Section 208 of such Act;

3. a refugee who is admitted to the United States under Section 207 of such Act;

4. an alien who is paroled into the United States under Section 212(d)(5) of such Act for a period of at least one year;

5. an alien whose deportation is withheld under §243(h) of such Act (as in effect immediately before the effective date [April 1, 1997] of §307 of Division C of Public Law 104-208) or §241(b)(3) of such Act (as amended by Section 305(a) of Division C of Public Law 104-208);

6. an alien who is granted conditional entry pursuant to §203(a)(7) of such Act as in effect prior to April 1, 1980; or

7. an alien who has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty in the United States by a spouse or parent, or by a member of the spouse's or parent's family residing in the same household as the alien if the spouse or parent consented to, or acquiesced in, such battery or cruelty. The individual who has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty must no longer reside in the same household with the individual who committed the battery or cruelty. The agency must also determine that a substantial connection exists between such battery or cruelty and the need for the benefits to be provided. The alien must have been approved or have a petition pending which contains evidence sufficient to establish:

   a. the status as a spouse or a child of a United States citizen pursuant to clause (ii), (iii), or (iv) of §204(a)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act; (INA); or

   b. the classification pursuant to clause (ii) or (iii) of Section 204(a)(1)(B) of the INA; or

   c. cancellation of removal under section 1229b of the INA (as in effect prior to April 1, 1997); or

   d. the status as a spouse or child of a United States citizen pursuant to clause (i) of §204(a)(1)(A) of the INA, or classification pursuant to clause (i) of Section 204(a)(1)(B) of the INA;

8. an alien child of a battered parent or the alien parent of a battered child as described in §1223A.8.;
9. an alien who is a victim of a severe form or trafficking in persons, or an eligible relative of a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons; or
10. an alien who is an Iraqi or Afghani immigrant who has been granted Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) status.

An alien who is a qualified alien as defined in B-610 and who enters the United States on or after August 22, 1996, is not eligible for any Federal means-tested public benefit for a period of 5 years beginning on the date of the alien's entry into the United States unless

Exception for refugees and asylees:

- An alien who is admitted to the United States as a refugee under section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act [8 U.S.C. 1157].
- An alien who is granted asylum under section 208 of such Act [8 U.S.C. 1158].
- An alien whose deportation is being withheld under section 243(h) of such Act [8 U.S.C. 1253] (as in effect immediately before the effective date of section 307 of division C of Public Law 104–208) or section 241(b)(3) of such Act [8 U.S.C. 1231 (b)(3)] (as amended by section 305(a) of division C of Public Law 104–208).
- An alien who is a Cuban and Haitian entrant as defined in section 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980.
- An alien admitted to the United States as an Amerasian immigrant as described in section 1612 (a)(2)(A)(i)(V)[1] of this title.
- An alien who is a victim of a severe form or trafficking in persons, or an eligible relative of a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons.
- An alien who is an Iraqi or Afghani immigrant who has been granted Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) status.

Veteran and active duty exception:

- A veteran who has met the minimum active duty service requirements of Section 5303A(d) of Title 38, United States Code (24 months or the period for which the person was called to active duty) and who is honorably discharged for reasons other than alienage and his spouse, and unmarried dependent children.
- An alien on active duty (other than active duty for training) in the Armed Forces of the United States, or
- The spouse or unmarried dependent child of an individual on active duty as described above or the unremarried surviving spouse of an individual described above who is deceased if the marriage fulfills the requirements of section 1304 of title 38.

No cash assistance shall be provided to a person:

- fleeing to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement after conviction, under the laws of the place from which the individual flees, for a crime, or an attempt to commit a crime, which is a felony under the laws of the state from which the individual flees. This does not apply with respect to the conduct of an individual, for any month beginning after the President of the United States grants a pardon with respect to the conduct, or
- violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under federal or state law. This does not apply with respect to the conduct of an individual, for any month beginning after the President of the United States grants a pardon with respect to the conduct.

Resources are assets or possessions that a household can convert to cash to meet needs. All resources are excluded when determining eligibility.

B-911 FAMILY INDEPENDENCE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (FITAP)

Income is any gain or benefit to a household that has monetary value and is not considered a resource. All income is counted when determining eligibility and payment amounts except income from sources listed in Louisiana Administrative Code (LAC) 67:III.1235.A.

B-911-1 FITAP Need Standards

The FITAP Need Standards are as follows:

Size of Household	Current Need Standard
1	$ 245.00
2	472.00
3	658.00
4	809.00
5	955.00
6	1,089.00
7	1,217.00
8	1,347.00
9	1,471.00
10	1,595.00
11	1,731.00
12	1,870.00
13	2,005.00
14	2,146.00
15	2,291.00
16	2,444.00
17	2,564.00
18	2,727.00

NOTE 1: To determine the need standard amount for households **exceeding** 18 persons, the need standard amount for the number in excess of 18 shall be added to the need standard amount for 18 persons.

B-911-2 FITAP Monthly Flat Grant Amounts

The FITAP monthly flat grant amounts are as follows:

Number of Persons	Flat Grant Amount
1	$ 122
2	188
3	240
4	284
5	327
6	366
7	402
8	441
9	477
10	512
11	551
12	590
13	630
14	670
15	712
16	757
17	791
18	839
18+	See note 2

Note 2: To determine the amount for households **exceeding** 18 persons, add the flat grant amount for the number in excess of 18 to the flat grant amount for 18 persons and subtract $50.

B-912 KINSHIP CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM (KCSP)

Income is any gain or benefit to a household that has monetary value and is not considered a resource. All income is counted when determining pretest eligibility except income from sources listed in Louisiana Administrative Code 67:III.1235.A. In order to meet this requirement, the gross countable income of the caretaker relative's KCSP income unit must be less than 150% of the federal poverty threshold for the family size.

- For purposes of this pretest, the caretaker's KCSP income unit is defined to include the child, the caretaker relative, and anyone residing in the home for whom the caretaker relative claims financial responsibility.
- For purposes of this pretest, income is defined as countable income belonging to any member of the KCSP income unit.

B-912-1 Income After Pretest

Income After Pretest - The child is determined eligible for KCSP if the child's countable income is less than $222. If the child's countable income is $222 or more, the child is ineligible.

Payment amount is $222 a month for each eligible child.

A child who receives federal or state foster care payments or SSI is not eligible to receive KCSP benefits.

Each applicant for, or recipient of, FITAP/KCSP is required to assign to the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, any accrued rights to support for any other person that such applicant or recipient may have, including such rights in his own behalf or in behalf of any other family member for whom the applicant or recipient is applying for or receiving.

By accepting FITAP/KCSP for, or on, behalf of a child or children, the applicant or recipient shall be deemed to have made an assignment to the department of any and all right, title, and interest in any support obligation and arrearage owed to, or for, such child or children or caretaker up to the amount of public assistance money paid for, or on behalf of, such child or children or caretaker for such term of time as such public assistance monies are paid; provided, however, that the department may thereafter continue to collect any outstanding debt created by such assignment which has not been paid by the responsible person. The applicant or recipient shall also be deemed, without the necessity of signing any document, to have appointed the Support Enforcement Services Program administrator as his or her true and lawful attorney-in-fact to act in his or her name, place, and stead to perform the specific act of endorsing any and all drafts, checks, money orders or other negotiable instruments representing support payments which are received on behalf of such child or children or caretaker as reimbursement for the public assistance monies paid to such applicant or recipient.

Each applicant for or recipient of FITAP/KCSP is required to cooperate in identifying and locating the parent of a child with respect to whom aid is claimed, establishing the paternity of a child born out of wedlock with respect to whom aid is claimed, obtaining support payments for such applicant or recipient and for a child with respect to whom aid is claimed, and obtaining any other payment or property due such applicant or recipient unless good cause is established. Good cause exists when:

- the client's cooperation with Child Support Enforcement is reasonably anticipated to result in physical or emotional harm to the child or caretaker relative which reduces his capacity to care for the child adequately;
- the child was conceived as a result of incest or rape;
- legal proceedings for adoption are pending before a court; or
- the client is being assisted by a licensed or private social agency to resolve the issue of whether to keep the child or relinquish him for adoption. The issue must not have been under discussion more than three months.

The Family Success Agreement (FSA) is a mutually developed contract between work-eligible FITAP recipients, on behalf of their family, and the department. The FSA sets forth mutual and time-bound responsibilities, expectations, activities, and goals designed to transition a recipient from welfare to self-sufficiency.

The purpose of the FSA is to formalize the understanding that assistance is temporary and to encourage the family to set goals that will enable them to become self-sufficient.

The FSA should be completed by the worker and the client and shall:

- include the clients time-bound goals, responsibilities, and work activity participation designed to enable self sufficiency,
- include an agreement that states the expectations of the program and the client and the natural consequences of not meeting expectations,
- specify the departments obligation to provide supportive services, assessments, notifications, information and case management to enable the clients to transition off cash assistance,
- be updated at least every six months or as the clients needs, goals, barriers, and family circumstances change.
- include any referrals to outside sources such as food banks, domestic violence counseling, etc.

The FSA will be completed on each work-eligible household member, and will be used to identify needs of other household members. Work-eligible is defined as a FITAP family (including cases which do not receive cash because their benefit would be less than $10) which includes at least one adult under age 60 or a teen head of household who is not disabled or incapacitated, or who is not caring for a family member who is disabled or incapacitated as documented by a medical professional. A work-eligible recipient is defined as an adult under age 60 or a teen head of household who is included in a work-eligible family and who is not disabled or incapacitated, or who is not caring for a family member who is disabled or incapacitated, as documented by a medical professional.

Families containing a parent who has received FITAP as an adult at least 24 months, whether consecutive or not, during the prior 60-month may no longer receive benefits unless eligible for one of the exemptions listed below. Only months of FITAP receipt after the January 1, 1997 date of implementation count toward the 24-month limit.

B-1211 EXEMPTIONS FROM 24-MONTH TIME LIMIT

The following situations represent exemptions from the 24-month time limit:

- all adults included in the assistance unit are incapacitated or disabled
- months after June 1999 in which a recipient receives the earned income disregard shall not count toward the 24-month time limit.

B-1212 EXTENSION OF 24-MONTH TIME LIMIT

An extension of the 24-month time limit may be granted in the following situations:

- an individual maintains compliance with the Family Success Agreement (FSA);
- factors relating to job availability are unfavorable;
- an individual loses his job as a result of factors not related to his job performance;
- other hardships have occurred which affect the individual's ability to obtain employment.

B-1213 60 MONTH TIME LIMIT

Eligibility for cash assistance under a program funded by Part IV of the Social Security Act is limited to a lifetime limit of 60 months. No cash assistance will be provided to a family that includes an adult who has received assistance for 60 months (whether or not consecutive) unless one of the following hardships exist (in households with two caretaker relatives, both caretaker relatives must meet at least one of these criteria):

- factors relating to job availability are unfavorable;
- an individual loses his job as a result of factors not related to his job performance;
- other hardships have occurred which affect the individual's ability to obtain employment

Any month for which such assistance was provided will be disregarded from the 24- and 60-month time limits with respect to the individual, if the individual was a minor child and not the head of a household or married to the head of a household.

Other eligibility factors that must be met in order to qualify for FITAP or KCSP benefits include:

1. Enumeration

   Each applicant for, or recipient of, FITAP/KCSP is required to furnish a Social Security number or to apply for a Social Security number if such a number has not been issued or is not known, unless good cause has been established.

2. Immunization

   FITAP and KCSP recipients are required to follow the schedule of immunizations as promulgated by the Louisiana Office of Public Health for any child under 18 years of age. No person is required to comply with this provision if that person or his/her parent or guardian submits a written statement from a physician stating that the immunization procedure is contraindicated for medical reasons, or if the person or his/her parent or guardian objects to the procedure on religious grounds.

3. School Attendance

   Work-eligible FITAP recipients, in order to ensure appropriate child development, educational attainment, and school attendance for each minor child included in the Family Success Agreement (FSA), must agree in the FSA to:

   - actively participate in their child's education through parent-teacher conferences, homework assistance, or other activities, and
   - provide documentation to the department that they are ensuring school attendance and are engaged in the child's learning.

   Work-eligible, minor parents who have not yet received a high school diploma or equivalency must attend school or related education classes designed to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent.

4. Drug Screening, Testing, Education and Rehabilitation Program

   All adult recipients of FITAP must be free from the use of or dependency on illegal drugs. All applicants for and recipients of FITAP, age 18 and over, must satisfactorily comply with the requirements of the drug screening, testing, education, and rehabilitation process. An illegal drug is a controlled substance as defined in R.S. 40:961 et seq.- Controlled Dangerous Substance.

5. Work Requirements

FITAP recipients must meet the work requirements outlined in LAC 67:III.Chapter 57.

6. Sanctions for Refusal to Accept a Job

Refusal to accept a job will result in the appropriate sanction being imposed on a work-eligible family as defined in section C-100. The case of a family that is not work-eligible shall have their case closed for at least one month and until the family complies.

7. Parenting Skills Education

Any work-eligible recipient or minor in a FITAP case and any child under age 18 in a KCSP case, who is pregnant or has a child under the age of one, is required to participate in a parenting skills education program.

8. Strikers

FITAP benefits cannot be paid to families in which the caretaker relative or stepparent is participating in a strike on the last day of the month and, if any other member of the household is participating in a strike, his or her needs cannot be considered in computing the FITAP benefits.

9. Individuals Convicted Of a Felony Involving A Controlled Substance

An individual convicted under federal or state law of any offense which is classified as a felony by the law of the jurisdiction involved and which has as an element the possession, use, or distribution of a controlled substance (as defined in Section 102(6) of the Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. 802[6]) shall be disqualified from receiving FITAP/KCSP benefits for a period of one year commencing on the date of conviction if an individual is not incarcerated, or from the date of release from incarceration if the individual is incarcerated (as defined in LAC 67:III,1255). This shall apply to an offense which occurred after August 22, 1996. This shall apply to individuals who have met residency requirements (as defined in LAC 67:III.1233).

A FITAP/KCSP household must report any change that affects eligibility or the amount of monthly benefits. Changes in income must be reported if the household's gross monthly income changes by more than $100 in earned income or $50 in unearned income. Changes shall be reported within 10 days of the knowledge of the change unless the FITAP/KCSP household is included in a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) simplified reporting household. The FITAP/KCSP household is then subject to the simplified household reporting requirements in accordance with LAC 67:III.2013.

The time within which the worker shall dispose of the application is limited to within 30 days from the date on which the signed application is received in the local office. The applicant shall:

- have benefits available through Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT),
- be mailed his first payment or notified that he has been found ineligible for a grant by the 30th day, unless an unavoidable delay has occurred.

To assist Louisiana families in becoming economically self-reliant so that their dependence on government benefits for basic needs is minimized, the department implemented the STEP Program effective October 1, 2003, so that all cash assistance recipients, with certain exceptions, are actively engaged in meaningful activities designed to enable their transition from cash assistance to self-reliance. It is further intended that cash assistance recipients demonstrate active and diligent personal responsibility in achieving self-reliance through employment and increased workplace literacy. All appropriate state agencies responsible for employment, training, and educating Louisiana's citizens are expected to cooperate in the pursuit of this goal.

Work-eligible recipients shall participate in appropriate work activities as agreed upon in the Family Success Agreement. Work-eligible is defined as families containing an adult under sixty years of age, or teen head of household, that is not disabled, incapacitated, or caring for a family member who is disabled or incapacitated as documented by a medical expert to which the status of disability is clearly established and explained. Work-eligible excludes cases in which only the child portion of need that is unrelated to a sanction or penalty, known as a child-only case, is considered in determining eligibility.

The work activities may include but are not limited to:

- unsubsidized employment,
- subsidized employment,
- unpaid work experience,
- on-the-job training,
- job search/job readiness,
- vocational education,
- satisfactory attendance at secondary school or in course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence, in the case of recipients who have not completed secondary schools or received a certificate,
- education directly related to employment, in the case of a recipient who has not received a high school diploma or certificate of equivalency,
- job skills training directly related to employment,
- community service, and
- the provision of child care to an individual who is participating in community service.

Participants who are found not to possess basic workplace or basic literacy skills, as determined by an assessment, shall combine employment and job readiness and job search activities with activities designed to increase their basic and workplace literacy skills.

A work-eligible applicant or recipient of cash assistance shall immediately participate in work activities for the minimum number of hours per week required by federal law unless one of the following exceptions applies. These temporary exceptions shall not exceed six months and shall occur only once in a twelve-month period. The exceptions include:

- inability to obtain appropriate child care; or
- status as a victim of domestic violence based on evidence presented to the department which may include, but not be limited to, information from law enforcement agencies or domestic violence providers.

Participants who receive a temporary exception shall be informed that this time is counted against their federal 60-month time limit and state 24-month time limit for receipt of cash assistance.

A Family Assessment shall be completed on all FITAP/STEP applicants included in the certification in order to assist the worker in identifying family strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers as well as determining programs that the applicants will need to become self-sufficient.

A work-eligible applicant for cash assistance must participate in job readiness activities as part of the core services available under STEP. The applicant will receive an initial employability assessment designed to determine their level of employability, immediate needs, and family circumstances. Job developers, through performance-based contracts, will provide job readiness services that can include, but are not limited to:

- workplace literacy assessment;
- resume development;
- interview skills;
- job search;
- workplace standards and soft-skills development;
- work ethics;
- interest inventories related to job market and skills;
- assistance with identification of available jobs and employers;
- life skills development;
- budget and financial management; and
- client follow-up.

Once an applicant is certified for eligibility, a comprehensive assessment will be conducted and include workplace literacy, basic skills and educational attainment, interests and aptitude related to employment, barriers to employment, need for education, supportive services such as child care and transportation, and other supportive services. Specialized assessments can occur for issues that arise after an initial assessment has been completed and could include substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health screening, or others as determined by the department.

Upon determination of eligibility and after completion of the comprehensive assessment, work-eligible participants shall enter into a contractual agreement, known as the Family Success Agreement (FSA), with the department. The FSA will specify:

- the client's time-bound goals, responsibilities, and work activity participation and
- the department's obligation to provide necessary supportive services, assessments, notifications, information, and case management.

The FSA shall be updated at least every six months or as the client's needs, goals, barriers, and family circumstances change.

The department shall complete a Family Transition Assessment (FTA) to assist participants with their transition from cash assistance.

The plan will be completed with:

- participants who have received three of the first six months of the earned income disregard,
- work-eligible families whose cases are closed for reasons other than non-compliance, and
- work-eligible families who have received 54 months of FITAP benefits.

The FTA shall include but is not limited to:

1. a plan for on-going success in the work force;
2. identification of short and long-term goals;
3. identification of potential barriers and an action plan to overcome these barriers; and
4. information regarding eligibility for supportive services including, but not limited to: Medicaid benefits, Food Stamp benefits, Child Care, transportation, Louisiana Child Health Insurance Program, the earned income tax credit, and TANF-funded services.

Supportive services provided to clients include but are not limited to:

- a full range of case maintenance and case management services designed to lead to self-sufficiency,
- transportation assistance,
- food stamp benefits,
- Medicaid,
- child care,
- TANF-funded services, other services necessary to accept or maintain employment.

Services may be provided to persons participating in the Family Assessment and to persons referred by the analyst to other activities, such as drug counseling, prior to their participation in a work activity. It also includes providing services to FITAP recipients participating in approved activities necessary to meet exemptions to the FITAP time limits.

In addition, although participation in the FITAP Drug Testing Program is not countable as a STEP activity, appropriate supportive services may be provided to FITAP recipients to facilitate attendance in these activities. Appropriate supportive services may also be provided to allow participation in educational activities for FITAP recipients who are exempt from STEP.

Louisiana has chosen to opt out of the provision of Section 402 (A)(1)(B)(iv) of Title IV of the Social Security Act which would have required a parent or caretaker to participate in community service employment after receiving assistance for two months.

Sanctions will be used as a last resort to inform participants that they have not met the expectations set forth in the Family Success Agreement (FSA). Participants shall be sanctioned for the following violations:

- failure of the participant to provide documentation to the department that they are ensuring school attendance and are engaged with their child's learning;
- failure of a work-eligible, minor parent with a child who has not yet received a high school diploma or equivalency, to attend school or related education classes designed to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent;
- failure of a public assistance recipient who is pregnant or has a child under age one to attend parenting education and other training conducive to the unique needs of new parents;
- failure of work-eligible families to meet the required employment and education activities for the minimum number of hours without good cause, as specified in the Family Success Agreement;
- failure or refusal to accept the opportunity for employment, quitting a job without good cause, or acceptance of voluntary reduction in earnings; or
- failure of work-eligible families to meet other requirements such as but not limited to immunization, cooperation with Support Enforcement Services, compliance with substance abuse screening, testing, treatment, etc. as specified in the Family Success Agreement.

If it is determined that a work-eligible family has failed to meet the required activities as specified in the Family Success Agreement without good cause, that family shall be ineligible for FITAP benefits as follows:

- first sanction - a minimum of one month or until compliance, whichever is longer;
- second sanction - a minimum of two months or until compliance, whichever is longer;
- third or subsequent sanction - a minimum of three months or until compliance, whichever is longer.

The following represent good cause for not complying with the requirements set forth in the Family Success Agreement:

- Appropriate child care or transportation is unavailable within a reasonable distance from the participant's home or worksite after efforts have been made, and assistance has been offered, to secure child care or transportation.
- Situations related to domestic violence supported by evidence presented to the department which may include but not limited to, information from law enforcement agencies or domestic violence providers.
- Situations related to the treatment of a mental or physical illness, including substance abuse treatment, where there is verification that participation in required activities would impair a treatment plan of a mental health or medical professional. Any participant that receives a good cause exception related to mental or physical illness shall incorporate the completion of the identified treatment plan in the Family Success Agreement.
- Temporary, short-term illness or the temporary care of a family member who is ill, as documented by a medical professional.
- Temporary emergency crisis, such as homelessness, fire, accident, dislocation due to natural causes, hurricane, flood, or similar circumstances that can be substantiated.

FITAP and KCSP applicants will be sent written notification of the disposition of the application. The applicant must either be issued a Louisiana Purchase Automated Benefit Card and be able access benefits, or notified that he has been found ineligible for benefits by the 30th day, unless an unavoidable delay has occurred.

In the month proceeding the final month of certification, a notice of expiration and Application for Continued Assistance will be provided to the household. The notice shall inform the household that failure to timely reapply will result in closure and include the right to a fair hearing. If the payee fails, without good cause, to keep a scheduled appointment, the case will be closed without further notification.

A notice of adverse action shall be sent at least 13 days prior to taking action to reduce or terminate benefits in FITAP cases or to terminate benefits in KCSP cases. In some circumstances advance notice is not required. A concurrent notice shall be sent to the client at the time of action in the following situations:

1. the agency has factual information confirming the death of the FITAP/KCSP payee;

2. the client signs a statement requesting reduction or closure and waiving the right to advance notice;

3. the client's whereabouts are unknown and agency mail directed to the client has been returned by the Post Office indicating no known forwarding address;

4. a client has been certified in another state and that fact has been established;

5. a child is removed from the home as a result of a judicial determination, or is voluntarily placed in foster care by his legal guardian;

6. the client has been admitted or committed to an institution;

7. the client has been placed in a skilled or intermediate nursing care facility or long-term hospitalization;

8. the agency disqualifies a household member because of an Intentional Program Violation and the benefits of the remaining household members are reduced or terminated because of the disqualification;

9. the case is closed due to the amount of child support collected through Support Enforcement Services;

10. the worker reduces or ends FITAP benefits or terminates KCSP benefits at the end of a normal period of certification when the client timely reapplies for FITAP/KCSP;

11. the client has been certified for Supplemental Security Income and that fact has been established; (applies only in FITAP cases);

12. the child is certified for Kinship Care Subsidy Payments; (applies only in FITAP cases);

13. the agency receives a written report signed by the head of household or other responsible household member which provides sufficient information for the agency to determine the household's benefit amount or household/client's ineligibility;

14. the agency receives a report of change through the semi-annual reporting process that would reduce or terminate benefits; or

15. mass changes.

The DCFS Bureau of Appeals is responsible for providing a system of hearings that must meet the due process standards set forth in Federal Regulations, State laws, and Goldberg vs. Kelly 397 US 254 (1970).

Each applicant is informed by the application form and by the appropriate notification forms (as decisions are made affecting his case) of his right to a hearing, of the method by which a hearing may be requested, and who may present his case. Detailed information concerning the Fair Hearing procedure is contained in the Fair Hearing Pamphlet, form OFS 5F, which is provided by the DCFS Bureau of Appeals when a Fair Hearing is requested.

The claimant may represent himself at the hearing or be represented by any authorized agent.

When a decision is made on a case, the client is notified and is allowed the following number of days from the date of the notice to request a Fair Hearing:

- FITAP 30 days
- STEP Program 30 days
- KCSP 30 days

The client may appeal at any time during a certification period for a dispute of the current level of benefits.

An appeal is timely requested if the appeal request:

- is delivered on or before the due date, or
- mailed on or before the due date. If the appeal request is received by mail on the first working day following the due date, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that the appeal was timely filed.

Recipients of FITAP and KCSP who request a Fair Hearing prior to the expiration of the Advance Notice of Adverse Action or within 13-days of the date of Concurrent Notice must have benefits continued at, or reinstated to, the benefit level of the previous month, unless:

- the recipient indicates he does not want benefits continued;
- a determination is made at the hearing that the sole issue is one of existing or changing state or federal law; or,
- change unrelated to the appeal issue affecting the client's eligibility occurs while the hearing decision is pending and the client fails to request a hearing after receiving the notice of change.

A decision by the hearing authority shall be binding on the Department of Social Services and shall summarize the facts of the case, specify the reasons for the decision, and identify the supporting evidence and the pertinent State or Federal regulations. The decision shall become a part of the record. The household shall be notified in writing of the:

- decision,
- reasons for the decision,
- available appeal rights, and
- right to pursue judicial review of the decision.

Client information may only be used for the administration of the program. Use and disclosure of information will be restricted in accordance with all applicable state laws and federal regulations. Use of information for commercial, personal, or political purposes is prohibited.

While DCFS is adhering to Office of Civil Rights policy by utilizing procedures that serve non-English speaking clients, it is the department's intention to continue finding ways to better locate these persons and provide them access to all TANF programs and services.

The Contract Accountability Review Team (CART) within DCFS reviews contracts with providers of TANF services to ensure that all aspects of the contract are being adhered to, including conducting assessments for disabilities and for limited English proficiency.

Needy families, through the FITAP, KCSP, and STEP programs, will be provided financial assistance, job preparation, work and supportive services. Payment and Need Standards for financial assistance are set forth in B-910, Income Eligibility, of this TANF State Plan. Financial assistance is delivered through Electronic Benefits Transfer.

The TANF Programs will be operated statewide in all political subdivisions of the state. No specific provisions will be applied to families moving to Louisiana from another state.

The Mission of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is to build and support a team of engaged staff serving together to empower families to attain self-sufficiency and ongoing independence through:

- strategic approaches,
- customer-focused policies and supportive services,
- simplified processes, and
- community-based solutions.

The goals are to redesign the department into a catalyst for development of self-support and self-sufficiency for those individuals and families served; to deliver efficient, effective and quality services to our customers; to improve the quality of work life towards achieving departmental unity; and to maximize the use and effectiveness of technology.

Administration of the Child Care Program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and the various TANF-funded programs requires the agency to coordinate activities between programs to ensure that the best services are provided.

Applicants and recipients of cash assistance programs will be automatically referred to the Child Support Enforcement Section through an interface of the LAMI and LASES systems. Notice of failure to cooperate will also be automatically generated through this interface and will result in sanctions.

Members of Indian tribes will be afforded equitable access to the program by application of all policies and procedures without discrimination.

The following provisions/program requirements encourage parental responsibility:

- Immunization of recipients under age 18;
- School attendance;
- Parenting skills training;
- Restriction in payments to minor unmarried parents;
- Cooperation with Office for Addictive Disorders;
- Development of the Family Success Agreement;
- Access and visitation program for non-custodial parents;
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program.

No waivers will be applicable.

- Louisiana has chosen to opt out of the provision at §402(a)(1)(B)(iv) of Title IV of the Social Security Act which would have required a parent or caretaker to participate in community service employment after receiving assistance for two months.
- Louisiana will not sanction single custodial parents or caretakers, caring for a child who has not attained six years of age, who have demonstrated an inability to obtain needed child care, per §407(e)(2) of Title IV of the Social Security Act.
- On a case by case basis, Louisiana may exempt single custodial parents caring for a child under age one from the work requirements for a maximum of 12 months per individual, and may disregard such an individual in determining the participation rate, per §407 (b)(5) of Title IV of the Social Security Act.
- Per §404(j) of Title IV of the Social Security Act, Louisiana has chosen not to mandatorily sanction a family that includes an adult between age 20 and 51 if such adult does not have or is not working toward attaining a secondary school diploma or equivalent. These adults will be required to participate in allowable work activities.
- Per §408 (b)(2)(B) of Title IV of the Social Security Act, Louisiana has chosen to conduct assessments within 180 days of the effective date for current recipients and within 90 days of certification for new applicants. Louisiana has also chosen to develop individual responsibility plans called a Family Success Agreement based on the assessments for all adult recipients.
- Per §402 of Title IV-A of the Social Security Act, Louisiana has chosen to waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, program requirements including: STEP Program participation; time-limited benefits; child support or paternity establishment cooperation requirements; refusal to accept or termination of full-time employment; residency, school attendance, and any other program requirement when the requirement makes it more difficult for the individual to escape domestic violence or places them at risk of further violence.

The FITAP, KCSP, and STEP Program, will be state administered through the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Division of Programs, Economic Stability and Self-Sufficiency section, and parish offices. The TANF Initiatives Programs will be state administered through the Department of Children and Family Services, Division of Programs, Economic Stability and Self-Sufficiency section, State Office.

1. Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP) – provides cash benefit assistance for needy families designed to strengthen families and promote job preparation and work. Funding method consists of federal and state dollars.

2. Strategies to Empower People (STEP) Program - provides FITAP recipients with employment-related activities and support services such as child care, transportation, and other expenses necessary for education, training or employment. Funding method consists of commingled federal and state dollars. The STEP program replaced the FIND Work program effective October 1, 2003. The STEP program was implemented to more effectively provide employment and training services to participants. Partners playing key roles in the administration of STEP are the Louisiana Workforce Commission and the Department of Education.

3. Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP) - provides cash assistance for children who reside with a qualified relative other than the parent. Funding method consists of federal and state dollars.

4. TANF Initiative Programs – DCFS, Division of Programs, Economic Stability and Self-Sufficiency section, through the TANF Initiatives works with a wide variety of community partners in order to provide quality services to the citizens of the state. These partners include other governmental agencies, non-profit, community-based and faith-based organizations, and many private businesses. Other state agencies such as the Departments of Education, Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Economic Development, Health and Hospitals, Louisiana State University, the Governor's Office, and the Supreme Court of Louisiana also partner with DCFS to provide TANF-funded services through Memoranda of Understanding with our department.

In addition to the programs described in this Plan which provide cash assistance and supportive services to needy families meeting the financial criteria contained in Section B of this Plan, the State of Louisiana intends to provide services to accomplish the goals or purposes outlined in Section 401 of the Social Security Act (42 USC 601 et seq), that is:

1. to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives;

2. to end dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;

3. to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and

4. to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

The programs known collectively as the TANF Initiatives provide benefits in the form of services to needy families, defined as families who have earned income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, or a family in which any member receives a Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP) grant, Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP) grant, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) services, Title IV-E, Medicaid, Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program (LaCHIP) benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or free or reduced school lunch.

Not all TANF Initiatives require a family to be "needy" as defined above in order to receive services. There are initiatives that target children, parents, or caretaker relatives of minor children and require only that the person be in need of the services provided by the initiative.

NOTE: The State Plan should be amended if the funding for any initiative changes or any initiatives are adjusted or eliminated.

The various TANF Initiatives are listed in Section G-200, TANF Initiative Programs, of this State Plan.

DCFS shall enter into a contract with the Governor's Office, Office of Community Programs, to provide early childhood education to certain four-year-olds in non-public schools.

These services meet TANF goal 3, to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and TANF goal 4, to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families by placing children in learning environments at the pre-school level to foster an interest in learning, increase literacy levels, and increase the likelihood of developing responsible behavior.

Eligibility for services is limited to families in which the child is one year younger than the eligible age for public school kindergarten and who have earned income at or below 200% of federal poverty level. A needy family consists of minor children residing with custodial parents, or caretaker relatives of minor children.

Services are considered non-assistance by the agency. Funding is federal dollars only.

DCFS shall enter into contracts with public agencies, non-profit organizations, or for-profit organizations to provide intervention services including crisis intervention, counseling, mentoring, support services, and pre-natal care information, in addition to information and referrals regarding healthy childbirth, adoption, and parenting to help ensure healthy and full-term pregnancies as an alternative to abortion.

These services meet TANF goal 1 to provide assistance to needy families so children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives and TANF goal 4 to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families by providing pregnancy and parenting support to low-income women, their male partners, and families who are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy.

Eligibility for services is limited to pregnant women, their male partners, and/or pregnant minors whose family's income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Services are considered non-assistance by the agency. Funding is federal dollars only.

The Department shall provide services for victims of domestic violence and their children, including rural outreach and community collaboration training for the purpose of educating attendees about domestic violence and the available services provided by the Department of Children and Family Services including but not limited to TANF, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance, Child care, and Employment Training. Additionally, these services will include education and training addressing the problem of statutory rape. These programs are designed to not only reach the public, but also law enforcement officials, educators, relevant counseling services. Training regarding statutory rape will also be made available to males 18 and older.

These services meet TANF goal 4 to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Eligibility for services is not limited to needy families. Eligibility for services is available to individuals, children, and/or their parents or caretaker relatives who are victims of domestic violence.

Services are considered non-assistance by the agency. Furthermore, direct services that are provided in response to an episode of need or a specific crisis situation and are non-recurrent such as but not limited to food, clothing, and shelter assistance, will not be provided beyond (4) four months. Funding is federal and state dollars. TANF funds will not be used to fund services that are being funded by the Family Violence Prevention Act or any other source of funding. However, TANF funds may be used for the expansion of services already funded by this act or any other sources of funding.

The Department has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Supreme Court of Louisiana to provide services to needy children identified as abused or neglected who are at risk of being placed in foster care or, are already in foster care. Community advocates provide information gathering and reporting, determination of and advocacy for the children's best interests, and case monitoring to provide for the safe and stable maintenance of the children or return to their own home.

The services meet TANF 1 goal to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the home of relatives by ensuring that the time children spend in foster care is minimized.

Eligibility for services is limited to needy families, that is, one in which any member receives a Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP) grant, Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP) grant, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) services, Title IV-E, Medicaid, Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program (LaCHIP) benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Free or Reduced School Lunch, or who has earned income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. A family consists of minor children residing with custodial parents, or caretaker relatives of minor children. Services are considered non-assistance by the agency. Funding method consists of federal-only dollars.

The Department has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Supreme Court of Louisiana to provide services to drug court clients that may include non-medical treatment, assessment, counseling, education, and training. Eligible services shall not include drug court administrative costs.

These services meet TANF goal 3 to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and TANF goal 4 to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families by providing assessment, counseling, education, training, non-medical treatment, etc.

Eligibility for services meeting TANF goals 3 and 4 may include any family in need of the provided services regardless of income. A family consists of a minor child residing with a custodial parent or caretaker relative of the minor child, and non-custodial parents. Services are considered non-assistance by the department. Funding method consists of federal-only dollars.

Through the current Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Education, DCFS will fund the Jobs for America's Graduates Louisiana (JAG-LA) Program to keep in school those students at risk of failing in school, to capture out-of-school youth in need of a high school education, to provide an avenue for achieving academically, and to assist students in ultimately earning recognized credentials that will make it possible for them to exit school and enter post-secondary education and/or the workforce.

Services provided will meet TANF Goal 3 to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies by providing intervention and improved life prospects for students who show evidence of failing, dropping out or engaging in negative behaviors that can lead to dependency, out-of-wedlock births, imprisonment, and/or other undesirable outcomes which may lead to the detriment and impoverishment of youth.

Eligible participants in the JAG-LA Program shall be 12-22 years of age and must face at least two designated barriers to success that include economic, academic, personal, environmental, or work related barriers.

Services are considered non-assistance by the agency. Funding method is federal dollars only.

The Department's Child Welfare Section shall identify and serve needy families where one or more children living in the home are at risk of abuse or neglect. The programs include:

- **Child Protection Investigation (CPI)** - comprises services to assess the validity of a report of child abuse or neglect involving a minor child or children residing with a custodial parent, an adult caretaker relative, or a legal guardian, to determine whether an emergency exists, and when deemed necessary, to develop a safety plan which may include coordination of services, emergency removal and placement, referral to Family Services or another appropriate agency, short term counseling, parenting guidance, and/or arrangements for concrete services, such as the Preventive Assistance Fund (PAF) and Reunification Assistance Fund (RAF).

- **Family Services** - comprises services to needy families including a child or children and their parents or adult caretaker relatives, where one or more minor children living in the home are at risk of abuse or neglect, after an allegation of child neglect or abuse has been validated, to assist in preventing the removal of a child from his care giver. Services are also provided to a family who requests protective services on its own when it is believed that a child in the family would be at risk of abuse or neglect. Elements of Family Services include problem identification, family assessment, risk assessment, safety planning, case planning, counseling, problem resolution, provision of or arrangements for needed services, and/or concrete aid through the Preventive Assistance Fund.

Financial eligibility is limited to needy families which include a minor child living with a custodial parent or an adult caretaker relative. A needy family is a family in which any member receives a Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP) grant, Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP) grant, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) benefits, Medicaid, Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program (LaCHIP), or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). These services meet TANF goal 1 to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.

Direct services which provide for basic needs, that may be provided in response to an episode of need or a specific crisis situation and are non-recurrent, such as but not limited to food, clothing, utilities, and shelter assistance, will not be provided beyond four months. Medical expenses and/or services are not eligible TANF funded services.

A family consists of a child or children and their parents or adult caretaker relatives within the fifth degree of relationship, where one or more minor children living in the home is at risk of abuse or neglect.

Services are considered non-assistance by the Department. Funding is federal and state dollars.

The Department shall establish the Individual Development Account (IDA) Program to provide asset and savings opportunities to low-income families for specific purposes as well as provide financial management education. The agency will contract with qualified non-profit organizations, or state or local governments who work with non-profit organizations, to develop and administer the IDA Program for low-income families.

An IDA is a financial account established by, or on behalf of, an individual eligible for assistance to allow that individual to accumulate funds for specific purposes. Funds deposited into the account may be matched by the agency using Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant funds. The balance of the account cannot exceed $6000, including interest, at any time.
Funds deposited by the individual into the account must be derived from earned income. All matching contributions must be deposited in a separate matching fund account and used in accordance with the purposes outlined below. The program will also provide financial management and organization education to eligible families.

IDA funds may be used for one or more of the following qualified purposes as determined by the Secretary:

1. postsecondary educational expenses paid from an IDA directly to an eligible educational institution;

2. first home purchase - qualified acquisition costs with respect to a qualified principal residence for a qualified first-time homebuyer, if paid from an IDA directly to the persons to whom the amounts are due.

3. business capitalization - amounts paid from an IDA directly to a business capitalization account which is established in a federally-insured financial institution and is restricted to use solely for qualified business capitalization expenses.

These services meet TANF goal 1 to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives. A family consists of minor children living with custodial parents or caretaker relatives of minor children.

Eligibility is limited to low-income families at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Services are considered non-assistance by the department. Funding method consists of federal-only dollars.

The Department has entered into Memoranda of Understanding to create programs to identify and provide supports and services to young children, ages 0 - 5, and their families who are at risk of developing cognitive, behavioral, and relationship difficulties. Services provided under this program will be limited to eligible families. Services may include but are not limited to:

1. referral to appropriate supports and services provided by network members and other resources in the community;
2. case management;
3. clinical case management;
4. behavior modification;
5. counseling;
6. parent support groups;
7. training and technical assistance;
8. consultation to other providers and agencies;
9. infant mental health screening;
10. infant mental health assessment;
11. non-recurrent, short-term emergency intervention funds for use in a crisis situation; and
12. other services as specified in the Individualized ECSS Family Services Plan.

Services offered by providers meet one or more of the following:

TANF goal 1: to provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own home or the home of a relative;

TANF goal 2: to end dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; and

TANF goal 4: to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Eligibility for services is limited to at-risk families that include a child age 0-5 years, and who have earned income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. A family consists of a minor child residing with a custodial parent or caretaker relative of the minor child, and non-custodial parents.

Services are considered non-assistance.

The Department has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of Behavioral Health, Addictive Disorders Division (OBH-AD) wherein DCFS shall fund the cost of substance abuse assessment and treatment of members of needy families to the extent that funds are available.

These services meet TANF goal 1 to provide assistance to needy families where as children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives and TANF goal 2 to end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by providing needy families with substance abuse treatment so that they may become self-sufficient in order to promote job preparation, work, and marriage.

Eligibility for services is limited to needy families, that is, a family in which any member receives a Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP) grant, Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP) grant, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) services, Medicaid, Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program (LaChip) benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Free or Reduced Lunch, or who has earned income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. A needy family includes a minor child living with a custodial parent or caretaker relative who has earned income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Services are considered non-assistance by the agency. Funding method consist of federal-only dollars.

The Department has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Public Safety and Corrections -Youth Services, Office of Juvenile Justice (DPSC-YS/OJJ), to provide services to youth and their families as a result of an adjudication and disposition by a court that orders DPSC-YS/OJJ to supervise youth in their communities in an effort to prevent removal from the home.

OJJ/CSP will complete an intake/assessment and develop a case plan for addressing the needs of the youth. The case plan will contain goals for all need areas and when indicated, include referrals to community programs for both youth and parents. These referrals may include but are not limited to:

1. case management, counseling, and in-home services;
2. parenting education and training, either in-home or out-of-home;
3. diagnostic and evaluation services provided in an attempt to make the most appropriate out-of-home placement;
4. supervision or non-residential programs for youth who remain in the home.

These services meet TANF goal 1 to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives by providing services to youth, who are in jeopardy of removal from their homes, and their families.

Financial eligibility for those services attributable to TANF/Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds is limited to eligible families, that is a family that includes a minor child living with a custodial parent or an adult caretaker relative. An eligible family is one in which any member receives a Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP) grant, Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP) grant, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) services, Title XIX (Medicaid) Medical Assistance Program benefits, Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program (LACHIP) benefits, or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Services are considered non-assistance by the agency. Funding method is State Maintenance of Effort.

The Department of Children and Family Services shall enter into Memoranda of Understanding or contracts to create quality, early childhood education and parenting services programs at various sites, such as schools, Head Start and Early Head Start Centers, churches, Class A Day Care Centers, and Family Child Day Care Homes to provide children with age-appropriate services during the school year, school holidays, summer months and before-and-after school and to provide parents, legal guardians, or caretaker relatives of children with parenting and adult/family educational services. The development of public education materials and training for parents, providers, professionals, and interested parties to educate and promote the services offered by this program and to encourage participation in the programs as well as the Child Care Assistance Program may be included in the contracts or be entered into as specific contracts promote applications for CCAP; assist providers; encourage eligible families to apply for services offered through DCFS; and educate parents and others who have an interest in children and families about criteria of quality child care and the needs of young children.

Services offered by providers meet TANF goal 3, to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies by providing supervised, safe environments for children thus limiting the opportunities for engaging in risky behaviors, and TANF goal 4, to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families by providing educational services to parents or other caretakers to increase their own literacy level and effectiveness as a caregiver, and to foster positive interaction with their children. Services are considered non-assistance by the agency. Funding method is federal dollars only.

Eligibility for services is limited to needy families. A needy family is a family in which any member receives a Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP) grant, Kinship Care Subsidy (KCSP) grant, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) services, Title IV-E, Medicaid, Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program (LaCHIP) benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Free or Reduced Lunch, or who has earned income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. A needy family consists of minor children residing with custodial parents, or caretaker relatives of minor children.

The Department shall enter into contracts with public agencies, non-profit organizations, or for-profit organizations to end the cycle of homelessness in Louisiana by providing services to homeless families which include but are not limited to comprehensive case management, educational and employment opportunities for adult participants, community referrals, life skill modules, housing options. Furthermore, direct services that are provided in response to an episode of need or a specific crisis situation and are non-recurrent such as but not limited to food, clothing, and shelter assistance, will not be provided beyond (4) four months.

These services meet TANF goal 1 to provide assistance to needy families so children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives by providing educational and employment opportunities to increase the literacy level and effectiveness of a caregiver.

Eligibility for services is limited to needy families, that is a family in which any member receives a Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP) grant, Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP) grant, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) services, Title IV-E, Medicaid, Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program (LaCHIP) benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Free or Reduced Lunch, or who has earned income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. A needy family consists of minor children residing with custodial parents, or caretaker relatives of minor children. Services are considered non-assistance by the agency. Funding method is federal dollars.

The Department shall enter into a contract with the Department of Economic Development to provide assistance to low-income families who wish to start their own businesses.

These services meet the TANF goal 2 to end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage. This goal will be accomplished by providing assistance to low-income families through the development of comprehensive micro-enterprise development opportunities as a strategy for moving parents into self-sufficiency.

Eligibility for services is limited to needy families, that is, a family in which any member receives a Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP) grant, Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP) grant, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)s, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) benefits, Medicaid, Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program (LaCHIP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Free or Reduced School Lunch, or who has earned income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. A family consists of a minor child residing with custodial parents or caretaker relatives. Only the parent or caretaker relative within the needy family is eligible to participate. Services are considered non-assistance by the agency. Funding is federal dollars only.

The Department shall enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Louisiana Office of Public Health, Maternal and Child Health Program to implement the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) Program Initiative which will serve low-income, first-time mothers by providing nurse home visitation services beginning early in pregnancy and continuing through the first two years of the child's life. First time mothers may enroll as early as possible during their pregnancy, through week 28 of their pregnancy. The goals of the program include, but are not limited to, improving child health and development and increasing the economic self-sufficiency for eligible participants.

Examples of the activities used to achieve these goals include, but are not limited to, engaging in activities centered on child development, parenting skills, developing a plan to continue the mother's education, and assisting the mother in finding employment. Medical services are not provided.

These services meet TANF goals 1 thru 4:

1. to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives;
2. to end dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
3. to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
4. to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Eligibility for services is limited to needy first time mothers. Eligible participants in the NFP Program shall be first-time mothers who are no more than 28 weeks pregnant at the time of enrollment and who are at or below 200% of poverty.

Services are considered non-assistance by the agency in that they are not considered to meet an on-going basic need. Funding method is federal dollars only.

The Department shall enter into a contract with the Department of Education for the LA 4 Public Pre-kindergarten Program.

Services provided include providing high quality early childhood education for low income 4-year-olds in participating public school districts.

These services meet TANF goal 3, to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and TANF goal 4, to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families by placing children in learning environments at the pre-school level to foster an interest in learning, increase literacy levels and increase the likelihood of developing responsible behavior.

Eligibility for services is limited to children of at risk families in which the child is one year younger than the eligible age for kindergarten and is eligible to receive free or reduced school lunch meals pursuant to the Federal Child Nutrition Program as documented by a completed application for such meals, whether or not such meals are sought. An at risk family is defined as a family experiencing one or more at risk indicators, such as, economic stress issues, literacy issues, child development issues, physical, mental, or nutritional health issues, or other factors which contribute to the family's inability to deal with issues in a way that is healthy and productive. Local school districts accept applications and determine eligibility for free or reduced school lunch meals.

Services are considered non-assistance by the agency. Funding source is both federal and state dollars. The State funding in this program is counted as Maintenance of Effort. Services provided through the LA 4 Public Pre-kindergarten Program will be limited to eligible families. An eligible family consists of a minor child residing with a custodial parent or caretaker relative.

The Department shall enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) relative to the Louisiana Go Grant, administered by LOSFA. The purpose of this program is to provide a need-based component to the state's financial aid plan to support nontraditional and low-income students who need additional aid to afford the cost of attending college.

These services meet the TANF goal 2 to end the dependence of needy parent on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage. This goal is accomplished by providing financial aid grant to eligible students who are in their pursuit of postsecondary education.

To receive the Louisiana Go Grant, a student must be receiving a federal Pell grant and have financial need of at least $200, as determined in accordance with a formula established by the Louisiana Board of Regents. Pell grant eligibility is determined according to provisions of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. The formula for determining financial need is subject to change on a yearly basis in order to ensure that the greatest number of students will benefit from the funds appropriated for the program by the Louisiana Legislature. For more program details, including award amounts, criteria for residency, definition of "education cost gap", go to the Louisiana Go Grant information page on the LOFSA website: www.osfa.state.la.us/go_grant.htm.

Services are considered non-assistance by the department. Funding is state dollars/ Maintenance of Effort or State matching funds requirements as per Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) regulations.

The State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is an annual refundable tax credit for low-income individuals and families who earn income from employment. The State EITC is provided to families with dependents and includes the amount of the State EITC that exceeds the taxpayer's tax liability (amount owed prior to application of any other credits). It is available to Louisiana residents who claim the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

These services meet TANF goal 2 to end the dependence of needy parent on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.

Eligible Louisiana residents can claim the state earned income credit on line 21 of the Louisiana Resident Individual Income Tax Return (Form IT-540) in the section titled "Refundable Tax Credits." The Louisiana earned income credit is equal to 3.5 percent of the federal EITC, to calculate the tax credit, multiply the federal EITC amount by .035 (3.5 percent). Some examples:

- For taxpayers with three children who file a federal return as married filing jointly, earning $36,000, the federal EITC is $2591. These taxpayers are entitled to claim a Louisiana earned income credit of $91.

- For a taxpayer with two children who files a federal return as single, head of household, or qualifying widow(er), earning $30,000, the federal EITC is $2,173. The taxpayer is entitled to claim a Louisiana earned income credit of $76.

- For taxpayers with one child who file a federal return as married filing jointly, earning $20,000, the federal EITC is $5,657. These taxpayers are entitled to claim a Louisiana earned income credit of $198.

Services are considered non-assistance by the department. Funding is state dollars/ Maintenance of Effort or State matching funds requirements as per Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) regulations.

The Department shall enter into Memoranda of Understanding with the Department of Education to provide student scholarships funded with the maintenance of effort or State matching funds. One-semester scholarships shall be offered to former public school students (kindergarten through third grade) in New Orleans to attend nonpublic schools due to the disruption caused by hurricanes.

These services meet TANF goal 3 to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

Scholarships provided under this program are limited to students who are members of a family with a total income that does not exceed 250% of the federal poverty guidelines. A family consists of a minor child residing with a custodial parent or caretaker relative of the minor child, and non-custodial parents. The Louisiana Department of Education determines eligibility of applicants through an application process.

Services are considered non-assistance by the agency. Funding is state dollars.

The Department shall enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Louisiana Department of Revenue, to provide the State Child Care Tax Credit. This credit is an annual refundable tax credit for low-income individuals and families who have a qualified dependent who is under the age of 13, and the parent or qualified relative has paid someone to provide care for the qualified dependent so that they can work or look for work. Also, this credit may be available if a Nonresident or Part-year resident individual income tax return for Louisiana is filed when the child care expenses have been incurred in Louisiana during the time as a resident.

These services meet TANF goal 2 to end dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.

Eligibility for services is limited to those families with minor children as noted above who meet the Louisiana Department of Revenue Child Care Tax Credit eligibility standards. The earned income must be $25,000 or less, in order for this credit to be refunded. The individuals or families must meet the same tests for earned income, qualifying dependents, and qualifying expenses as required by the Internal Revenue Service. A family consists of minor children residing with custodial parents or caretaker relatives of minor children.

Services are considered non-assistance by the department. Funding is state dollars/ Maintenance of Effort or State matching funds requirements as per Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) regulations.

The state will operate programs to provide Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) so that the children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; to end dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

These programs are known in Louisiana as the Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP), Strategies to Empower People (STEP) Program, Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP), and the TANF Initiatives.

Executive Officer of the state: Bobby Jindal.

In administering and operating a program which provides Temporary Assistance for Needy Families with minor children under title IV-A of the Social Security Act, the State will:

A. Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program under Part A in all political subdivisions of the State:

   The Department of Children and Family Services is the agency responsible for administering the program;

   The Department of Children and Family Services is the agency responsible for supervising the program;

B. Assure that local governments and private sector organizations:

   1. Have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and

   2. Have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services.

C. Operate a Child Support Enforcement program under the State plan approved under Part D;

D. Operate a Foster Care and Adoption Assistance program in accordance with Part E, and certify that the State will take all necessary actions to ensure that children receiving assistance are eligible for medical assistance;

E. Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a Tribal Family Assistance plan approved under Section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government.

F. Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage.

G. Make available to the public a summary of the State plan; and

Optional Certifications:

H. The State has established and is enforcing standards and procedures to:

1. Screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;

2. Refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and

3. Waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for as long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence.

CERTIFIED BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE STATE:

December 29, 2010
Date

Original Signature on File
Signature
Bobby Jindal
Governor, State of Louisiana

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

June 27, 2011

Ms. Ruth Johnson
Secretary
Department of Children & Family Services
627 N. Fourth St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Ms. Johnson:

In accordance with section 402(a) of the Social Security Act, Louisiana must periodically renew its funding status as an "eligible State" in order to continue to receive Federal funds under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. This renewal process requires that the State submit a TANF plan, which contains all of the necessary elements listed in section 402 of the Social Security Act (the Act), including the State certifications specified under sections 402(a)(2)-(7). I am pleased to inform you that as of January 1, 2011, Louisiana continues to qualify as an "eligible State" under the TANF program.

Within the Department's statutory authority regarding the TANF program, the Secretary has found that Louisiana submitted a plan that includes the necessary elements listed in section 402 of the Act. By this finding, the Secretary neither approves nor disapproves the policies and practices outlined in the plan. As an eligible State, Louisiana is entitled to an annual State Family Assistance Grant (SFAG) of $163,971,985.

If you have any questions about the information in this letter, please contact Mr. Larry Brendel, TANF Regional Program Manager for Region VI, at (214) 767-6236.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Shelbourne
Director
Division of State TANF Policy

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Office of Family Assistance
1301 Young St, Room 945
Dallas, TX 75202

November 22, 2011

Ruth Johnson
Secretary
Department of Children and Family Services
627 North 4th St., 8th Floor
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Secretary Johnson:

Thank you for submitting the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Louisiana State Plan Amendment dated October 28, 2011. These amendments have been incorporated into the Louisiana TANF State Plan, which was found complete by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) on June 27, 2011.

The Louisiana TANF State Plan was amended to reflect changes to the following existing programs:

- G-203, Family Violence and Prevention
- G-208, Child Welfare Programs

No other changes to the Louisiana TANF State Plan were made.

If you have any questions about the information in this letter, please contact John Disque at (214) 767-8077.

Sincerely,

Larry Brendel
TANF Regional Program Manager

cc: Robert Shelbourne, Office of Family Assistance
Brent Villemarette, Deputy Secretary of Programs

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Office of Family Assistance
1301 Young St, Room 945
Dallas, TX 75202

January 3, 2012

Ruth Johnson
Secretary
Department of Children and Family Services
627 North 4th St., 8th Floor
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Secretary Johnson:

Thank you for submitting the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Louisiana State Plan Amendment dated December 16, 2011. This amendment has been incorporated into the Louisiana TANF State Plan, which was found complete by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) on June 27, 2011.

The Louisiana TANF State Plan was amended to reflect changes to the following existing program:

- B-910, Income Eligibility: B-912-1 is amended to reduce the maximum income limit in determining eligibility for the Kinship Care Subsidy Program.

No other changes to the Louisiana TANF State Plan were made.

If you have any questions about the information in this letter, please contact John Disque at (214) 767-8077.

Sincerely,

Larry Brendel
TANF Regional Program Manager

cc: Robert Shelbourne, Office of Family Assistance
Brent Villemarette, Deputy Secretary of Programs