



PROPOSED USDA “BROAD-BASED CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY” RULE

WHAT IS “BROAD-BASED CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY”? [AKA: “BBCE” OR “CAT-EL”]

- » Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility allows individuals and households who already qualify for other anti-poverty measures including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to be categorically eligible for SNAP.
- » States are able to opt-into this option; currently 40 states utilize some form of BBCE
- » States can implement BBCE through one or both of the following:
 - The **asset limit** which evaluates an applicant’s assets (i.e. a savings account) can be **raised** or **eliminated** altogether
 - The income limit which evaluates an applicant’s gross income can be **raised** from 135% of the poverty line to up to **200% of the poverty line**
- » Children who qualify for SNAP through BBCE also automatically qualify for free/reduced school lunch

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- » BBCE reduces the administrative SNAP application burden for families & individuals who are enrolled in these eligible programs
- » BBCE allows families and individuals to receive SNAP benefits when they are struggling without having to draw down their savings accounts or assets first
- » Allows individuals and families the opportunity to build their assets and to eventually achieve economic independence

WHAT IS THE RULE?

The proposed USDA rule significantly limits the population of TANF recipients who are eligible for BBCE by limiting categorical eligibility to only certain types of TANF benefits and to those households and individuals who receive what are considered to be “ongoing and substantial” benefits.

WHAT ARE THE ANTICIPATED EFFECTS?

- » Over **3.1 million people** are expected to lose SNAP benefits under this rule including **500,000 children** who will also lose access to free school meals
- » Of these affected populations, an estimated **1.8 million** people live in working households and **1.9 million** people live in households with children
- » **Children, seniors, people with disabilities** and **working poor families** will be disproportionately affected by these cuts
- » The elimination of this option is expected to increase both **state- & federally-funded** administrative costs
- » Will result in cause **higher food insecurity** across the country and **lower savings rates** amongst SNAP recipients
- » Will increase the number of SNAP recipients who **cycle on and off the program**, also know as “churn”

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO LOUISIANA?

Louisiana does not currently utilize the BBCE option statewide. However, in the aftermath of the BP Horizon Oil Spill, Louisiana implemented BBCE for a few years to allow fishermen, processors, and other seafood industry workers who were unable to work after the oil spill to receive SNAP benefits without having to drain their savings accounts first. These workers and fishermen could then get back on their feet more quickly once the Gulf of Mexico industry recovered. During times of widespread disaster & economic hardship as well as during regular periods of food insecurity, **BBCE is an important option for Louisiana to support communities facing hunger and help Louisianans to achieve economic independence long-term.**