



## Louisiana Restores Food Stamp Benefits for Thousands



In mid-December, the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice and NCLEJ filed a lawsuit against the State of Louisiana for threatening to terminate food stamps for more than 31,000 low-income individuals. The suit alleges that the State's unlawful actions,

which were taken notwithstanding Louisiana's chronic high unemployment, would have caused many thousands to go hungry.

Outgoing Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal's administration reversed an 18-year policy of applying for a waiver from the federal government of a federal food stamp law time-limiting food stamps for able-bodied adults without dependents to three out of every 36 months unless they are working. A few days later, then Governor-elect John Bel Edwards indicated in letters to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service and to the Louisiana agency that he would request the federal waiver allowing food assistance benefits to be continued when he took office in January. [Read more](#)

## Georgia Gov. Rescinds Executive Order Banning Syrian Refugees from Resettlement Benefits

In early January, Governor Nathan Deal of Georgia rescinded an executive order he issued in November banning Syrian refugees from resettlement benefits. In December, NCLEJ sent a letter to counsel representing Georgia's Division of Family Services asking that the agency cease and desist from refusing to process food stamp applications from Syrian refugees as agency staff had been instructed to do following

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the Governor's executive order. NCLEJ is gratified that the State of Georgia is now obeying civil rights and food stamp laws by allowing Syrian refugees to seek benefits that they are eligible to receive.

## **NCLEJ Article Addresses Due Process Issues When Modernized Public Benefits Systems Fail Families**

### **CLEARINGHOUSE COMMUNITY**

NCLEJ's Gina Mannix, Marc Cohan, and Greg Bass have authored an article, "How to Protect Clients Receiving Public Benefits When Modernized Systems Fail: Apply Traditional Due Process in New Contexts," for the public interest law journal *Clearinghouse Review*. The article, which was published to the Clearinghouse Community in January 2016, reviews the sophisticated technology systems used to administer public benefits, how flawed implementation results in arbitrary exclusions of eligible families, and how due process concepts of fundamental fairness may help shape advocacy to protect applicants and recipients. An accompanying case study of advocacy by Community Legal Services in Philadelphia was also published.

The authors will participate in a live "Hangout on Air" on Wednesday, January 20 to discuss their work. [Click here](#) to read the article and find out more about the hangout.

## **Low-Income Georgians to Receive \$22 Million to Compensate for Wrongly Deprived Food Stamps**



Tens of thousands of low-income Georgia families who were wrongly deprived of food stamps will receive \$22 million as part of an agreement negotiated by NCLEJ. This settlement, announced in January, will provide relief to nearly 48,000 households across the state, many of whom had to stop paying for housing or medicine to cover the cost of feeding their families when they lost their food stamps. The class action lawsuit that led to the settlement, *Melanie K. v. Horton*, challenged a system-wide failure by the Georgia agency to process food stamp applications and renewals. [Read more](#)

## **NCLEJ is Now on Twitter!**

As of January 18, NCLEJ is now on Twitter. Follow us at @NCLEJustice for NCLEJ news and insights into the challenges facing low-income people in the United States. In addition, look out for our new and improved website coming

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