



end of the 45-day period, DHS will review the policy and make further recommendations.

**What postdisaster obligations arise regarding employees who have applied for and are awaiting work visas?** Some employees had applied for work visas before the recent hurricanes, and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services recognizes the impact that the disasters had on immigrant communities along the Gulf Coast. The agency is currently reviewing processes that will allow for the continuation of operations and provide assurances that the immigrants can receive benefits and services. When those services become available, they'll be posted at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

### *Federal contractors*

**Are federal contractors and subcontractors required to develop affirmative action plans for disaster-relief work?** No. On September 9, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) waived the affirmative action requirements for federal contractors and subcontractors. But while the OFCCP's memo explaining the waiver didn't specify which types of contracts or subcontracts fall under the waiver, the agency's director, Charles James, clarified that it applies to "service and supply contracts" — not construction contracts. Federal contracts and subcontracts for construction work are still subject to the affirmative action requirements. A copy of the memo containing the waiver's full terms can be found at [www.dol.gov/esa/ofccp](http://www.dol.gov/esa/ofccp).

### *Unemployment benefits*

**Do any programs provide unemployment assistance to Hurricane Katrina victims?** Yes. When President George W. Bush declared disaster areas after the recent hurricanes, several individual assistance programs became available. One is the Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program, which helps those whose employment or self-employment has been lost *or* interrupted as a direct result of a major disaster and who *aren't* eligible for regular state unemployment insurance. DUA is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency but administered by state unemployment agencies.

To apply in Louisiana, individuals may report in person to the nearest job center, file over the Internet at the Louisiana Department of Labor's website at [www.laworks.net](http://www.laworks.net), or call (866) 783-5567. For more information about the DUA program, you may also call the DOL at (866) 487-2365.

As for those who are eligible for regular state unemployment compensation benefits, they can receive those benefits if they can't work because of the hurricanes. Eligibility requirements vary from state to state. Generally, qualified employees can receive the benefits if they're unemployed for reasons unrelated to their own misconduct. Louisiana has a one-week waiting period for the benefits, although the Louisiana Department of Labor has stated that claims will be processed as soon as possible.





