

Emergency Food & Shelter Program (EFSP) Phase 42 Overview

Background

The Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) was created in 1983 to supplement and expand the work of local social service agencies, both nonprofit and governmental, to help people with economic emergencies (not disaster-related [i.e., fires of any kind, floods, tornadoes, etc.] emergencies). Therefore, EFSP funds are not to be used to provide emergency assistance for circumstances that are the immediate result of a disaster situation. EFSP funds may be used to provide economic assistance in the long term, even if the current circumstances may have been impacted by an earlier disaster occurrence.

EFSP funds are Federal funds made available through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency. The EFSP funding is open to all organizations helping hungry and homeless people. EFSP funds must be used to supplement feeding, sheltering (including transitional sheltering), rent/mortgage, and utility assistance efforts only. The program is governed by a National Board composed of representatives of the American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA; The Jewish Federations of North America; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; The Salvation Army; and United Way Worldwide. The Board is chaired by a representative of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

EFSP Guiding Principles

- **Efficiency**—fiscal administration, reporting, and procedural guidance to Local Boards and Local Recipient Organizations
- **Accountability**—good steward of taxpayers' dollars through reasonable oversight and transparency
- **Responsiveness**—prioritize the allocation of supplemental funds to the neediest areas in the nation
- **Partnership**—promote and strengthen collaboration between non-profit organizations and public sector
- **Facilitating**—maximizing appropriate local decision-making through clear guidance and training

Use of Funds

Program funds are used to provide the following, as determined by the Local Board in funded jurisdictions (*see pages 2 through 5 for the categories that will be considered by the Local Board*).

No individual, family, or household may be charged a fee for service or be required to attend religious/counseling services with relation to the assistance received under EFSP.

Local organizations, whether nonprofit or governmental, may apply. Successful applicants are referred to as Local Recipient Organizations (LROs). The Local Board is: (1) responsible for considering all applications, (2) determining which services are funded, and (3) determining which organizations will receive funds.

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Eligibility

EFSP funds may only be used to supplement and extend existing food and shelter services. Funds may not be used as a substitute for other program funds or to start new programs. Under the terms of the grant from the National Board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must:

- Be a nonprofit or government agency;
- Not be debarred or suspended from receiving Federal funding;
- Have a checking account (cash payments are not allowed);
- Have an accounting system or fiscal agent approved by the Local Board;
- Have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN);
- Have a Universal Entity Identifier and provide along with other required associated information;
- Conduct an independent annual audit if receiving \$100,000 or more in EFSP funds;
- Conduct an annual accountant's review if receiving \$50,000 to \$99,999 in EFSP funds;
- Conduct annual audit, if expending \$750,000 or more in Federal funds, in compliance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 CFR 200 of the Office of Management and Budget;
- Be providing services and using its other resources in the area in which they are seeking funding and must not charge a fee to clients;
- Practice nondiscrimination (those agencies with a religious affiliation wishing to participate in the program must not refuse services to an applicant based on religion or require attendance at religious services as a condition of assistance, nor will such groups engage in any religious proselytizing in any program receiving EFSP funds);
- Have a voluntary board if private, not-for-profit; and,
- To the extent practicable, involve homeless individuals and families, through employment, volunteer programs, etc., in providing emergency food and shelter services.

Fiscal Agency/Fiscal Conduit

Heart of Florida United Way serves as the fiscal agent/fiscal conduit for all agencies awarded EFSP funds. As such, **Heart of Florida United Way must issue all payments on behalf of recipient organizations to vendors only**. Heart of Florida United Way may not issue reimbursements to recipient organizations. The exception to this is when an LRO is using the per diem allowance for mass shelter or the per meal allowance for served meals.

Intent of Program and Eligible Program Costs

The EFSP is a needs-based program for which clients must qualify. The intent of this program is for the purchase of food and shelter, to supplement and expand currently available resources and **not** to substitute or reimburse ongoing programs and services or to start new programs. The intent regarding the use of funds is that goods and services purchased or provided with EFSP funds should be used as necessary on a daily basis to help meet community needs during the spending period. Food vouchers and purchased gift certificates/gift cards must be distributed and used during the jurisdiction's spending period. Large purchases made at the end of the spending period do not meet the intent of the program and will be considered ineligible.

Eligible program costs could include:

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- **Food Purchases for Food Banks/Pantries and Other Food Providers**

For food banks/pantries and other food providers. Eligible costs include the purchase of food, food vouchers, and gift certificates for food (gift certificates must be marked “Food Only”). Only food banks may operate under EFSP as both vendor and LRO. **Documentation required:** Spreadsheets and dated unpaid invoices.

- **Food Purchases for Mass Feeding**

For mass feeding sites. Eligible costs include the purchase of food (hot meals, groceries); dessert items (e.g., cookies, snack food, candy, etc.) used as a part of a daily meal plan may be purchased in limited amounts. **Documentation required:** Spreadsheets and dated, unpaid invoices.

- **Mass Shelter Expenses: Per Diem Allowance**

Per diem allowance of **exactly \$12.50 per person per night** for mass shelter providers (five beds or more in one location), only if (a) approved in advance by the Local Board and (b) the LRO’s total mass shelter award is expended in this manner. The \$12.50 rate may be expended by the LRO for any cost related to the operation of the mass shelter (such as shelter rent, shelter utilities, and shelter staff salaries if necessary to provide a night of shelter). **Documentation required:** Schedules showing the daily rate of \$12.50 and the number of persons sheltered by date with totals and supporting documentation (service records or sign-in logs).

- **Mass Feeding Expenses: Per Meal Allowance**

Per meal allowance of **exactly \$3.00 per meal served** if (a) approved in advance by the Local Board and (b) the LRO’s total mass feeding award is expended in this manner. The \$3.00 per meal allowance may be expended by the LRO for any related cost (such as rent, utilities, and staff salaries for those staff necessary for the preparation and serving of food). **Documentation required:** Daily schedule showing meal rate of \$3.00 and the number of meals served by date with totals and supporting documentation (service records or sign-in logs).

- **Other Shelter (Off-Site Lodging Hotel/Motel)**

For other shelter assistance, eligible program costs include off-site emergency lodging (room and tax only) in a hotel/motel or other off-site shelter facility, provided conditions 1 and 2 below are met.

1. No appropriate on-site shelter is available; and
2. LROs may now provide up to 90 days of assistance for clients per phase if it is necessary to prevent homelessness.

Documentation required: Spreadsheets and dated, unpaid invoices. Note: If using a unique identifier when submitting documentation for clients served, the LRO is required to provide documentation of the statute which applies to the protection of clients and the services provided.

- **Rent/Mortgage Assistance/Eviction Prevention**

Limited emergency rent or mortgage assistance principal and interest only (P&I), for individuals or household, provided conditions “a” through “g” below are met:

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- a. Payment is in arrears or due within 10 calendar days;
- b. other resources have been exhausted;
- c. The client is 1) a resident of the home or apartment and 2) responsible for the rent/mortgage on the home or apartment where the rent/mortgage assistance is to be paid;
- d. LROs may pay more than one-month rental or mortgage assistance. LROs may now pay up to 90 days (3 months) for clients per phase if it is necessary to maintain housing;
- e. Assistance is provided only once in a jurisdiction by a single LRO in each award phase for each individual/household (with exception of item d [2] above);
- f. The month paid is the current amount or part of the arrearage that is still owed at the time of payment and is from the current award phase and;
- g. Payment must guarantee an additional 30 days' service.

Late fees, legal fees, deposits, and condo fees are ineligible. If a client has two mortgages, assistance may only be given on the principal or first mortgage for the client's residence. Payments for mobile homes and lots are eligible and can be paid to a mortgage company or to a private landlord. **Documentation required:** Dated and signed documentation from landlords [must include amount of one month's base rent and due date], mortgage company's documentation and copy of mortgage loan coupon showing monthly mortgage (principal and interest must be itemized) amount, and date due. Payments must be made to the landlord ONLY, not to both client and landlord. Documentation must support the payment made and is limited to a maximum of one month's assistance.

- **First Month's Rent Payment**

First month's rent may be paid when an individual or household:

- a. Is transient and plans to stay in the area for an extended period of time; or
- b. Is moving from a temporary shelter to a more permanent living arrangement; or
- c. Is being evicted because one month's payment will not forestall eviction in current housing.

First month's rent:

- a. Cannot be provided in addition to emergency rent/mortgage.
- b. May be provided in addition to assistance provided for off-site or mass shelter.
- c. May only be provided by a single LRO in a jurisdiction each award phase for an individual/household.
- d. Cannot be paid more than 30 calendar days before occupancy.

Documentation required: Dated and signed documentation from landlords and current lease [must include amount of first month's rent and due date]. Documentation must support the payment made which is limited to a maximum of one month's assistance.

- **Utility Assistance**

For utility assistance, eligible program costs include limited metered utility assistance (includes gas, electricity, water, and sewer service) for individuals or households. The client must be 1) a resident of the home or apartment and 2) responsible for the utility on the home or apartment for which utility assistance is to be paid provided conditions "a" through "f" below are met:

- a) Payment is in arrears or due within 10 calendar days;
- b) All other resources have been exhausted (e.g., State's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program);

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- c) Local Recipient Organizations (LROs) may pay more than one-month utility assistance. LROs may now pay up to 90 days (3 months) for clients per phase if it is necessary to prevent disconnection of services;
- d) The month paid is the current amount, budget amount or part of the arrearage that is still owed at the time of payment and that is either from the current award phase or for continuous service prior to award phase that remains past due;
- e) Each utility is paid only once in each award phase for any individual or household; and
- f) Payment guarantees an additional 30 days service.

Reconnect fees are eligible. Required fees that are included on the bill are eligible. Level billing or budget payments are eligible. Elective fees/items are not eligible. Late fees and deposits are not eligible. Repayment agreements beyond the one-month billing are not eligible. ***Documentation required:*** (1) Spreadsheet, metered utilities [e.g., electricity, water], the most recent copy of past due or current utility bill with a breakdown which clearly identifies the one month's charges being paid including due date; or, (2) spreadsheet, non-metered utilities [e.g., propane, firewood], invoices for fuel including due date or delivery date. (Estimated delivery quotes are not acceptable.)

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Required Attachments

In addition to the fully completed application, your organization must submit the following attachments:

1. Proof of Incorporated/recognized status in the State of Florida as a nonprofit organization;
2. Proof of Tax Exempt Status under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3);
3. List of Organization's Board Members;
4. Independent Annual Audit dated 2023 or later (*final version only*);
5. Management Letter or letter from CPA indicating no management letter was issued;
6. Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion Contracts / Subcontracts Form;
7. Copy of System for Award Management (SAM) search results showing the organization's name, UEI, status, and expiration date;
8. Agency Revenue Comparison (with most recently completed fiscal year and current fiscal year);
9. Agency Expenditure Comparison (with most recently completed fiscal year and current fiscal year).

Please Note: The attachments are required by EFSP National, therefore, no exceptions can be made, and no applications with missing documentation may be considered by the Local Board.

For complete information on the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, please visit

<https://secure.hfuw.org/epledge/EFSPApplication>

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Appeals Process

The appeals process outlined below is a statement to eligible organizations that the Emergency Food and Shelter Local Board is committed to fairness and openness in the Emergency Food and Shelter funding process. The National Emergency Food and Shelter Board does not mandate any particular appeals process but has determined that it is the responsibility of the Local Board to establish an appeals process that is available and timely. Except for the amount of the Emergency Food and Shelter allocation available, the Local Board is the primary decision-maker in the review process. If it is determined that the Local Board cannot make a fair and unbiased recommendation regarding any appeal, another Board or committee/commission will be asked to participate/assist. The appeals process is applicable to applicant organizations that were denied funding through the EFSP application process and **does not** apply to organizations seeking to appeal the amount of funding received by a successful applicant. Organizations denied funding may appeal only once per phase.

1. Any applicant organization not selected for EFSP funding will be notified of the appeals process by email notifying the organization of the Local Board's funding decision.
2. To be considered a valid basis for appeal, the organization's reasons must fall within one or more of the following criteria:
 - a) New data or information relevant to the funding request which was not available at the application deadline is now available;
 - b) Misunderstanding or factual error in the Local Board's evaluation or interpretation of the request for EFSP funding; and/or,
 - c) Other legal issues or concerns on the part of the Local EFSP Board (such as fraud or misuse of EFSP funds by other funded organizations). In the case of an appeal on the basis of fraud or other issues of federal funds, the organization has the right to appeal in writing directly to the EFSP National Board. Other types of appeals CANNOT be referred to the National Board for further review.
3. The EFSP appeals process should not be considered by the applicant organization to restate or reemphasize points already made in the original application.
4. Any appeal from an applicant organization that was denied funding must be submitted in writing from the organization's chief professional officer or chief volunteer officer (board chair), detailing the basis for the appeal. Submitted appeals must include the following:
 - The original request made by the organization, including the program name and description, a brief description of the amount requested and how the funds will be used;
 - The basic reasons for the appeal (choosing from the list above);
 - Supporting documentation for the appeal (new information, point-by-point rationale for other categories);
 - Signatures of the Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, and Board Chair of the organization appealing.
5. The Local Board will review the appeal and hold a hearing within 10 days of receipt of the written request from the applicant organization. If an appeals hearing is determined to be inappropriate, the organization will be notified. If an appeal is deemed appropriate, the Local Board will make a recommendation regarding the agency appeals request. **The Local Board's decision will be final.**

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Process Timeline

When funds become available, the Local Board must advertise the availability of funds. The EFSP phase process timeline is dependent on funds announcements and guidelines set by the National Board. Timelines implemented and enforced by the Local Board are to ensure adherence to the guidelines set by the National Board. For EFSP Phase 41, the timeline/deadlines are as follows:

Intent to Apply Deadline:	January 24, 2025
Application Submission Deadline:	January 31, 2025
Award Notification:	February 24, 2025
Intent to Appeal Deadline:	February 28, 2025
EFSP Phase 40 Spending Period:	January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025
Invoice/Receipt Submission Deadline:	January 12, 2026

For complete information on the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, please visit <https://secure.hfuw.org/epledge/EFSPApplication>.

Intent to Apply

To apply for funding, agencies must submit an intent to apply by 5:00 p.m. on January 24, 2025. Please email efsp@hfuw.org with the name of your organization as well as your complete contact information in order to receive a login to the online application.

Submission Instructions

EFSP Phase 42 applications must be submitted online by 5:00 p.m. on January 31, 2025. To submit your organization's EFSP application and all required documentation/attachments:

1. Go to our website at www.UnitedWayWorks.org and enter your login.
2. Complete the online application for EFSP Phase 42.
3. Upload all required documentation into the online system.

Please Note: Submission of the online application and required documentation through the online portal is required.