

OVERVIEW

Please note that this overview is provided by the Local Board and is not considered an official document. If a grant application is chosen for funding, all Local Recipient Organizations are required to understand and follow the extensive rules (117-page document) put forth by the National Board. The newest guidelines were published for Phase 35, an addendum to the manual was published for Phase 38, and a one-page update was published for Phases 39 and ARPA-R. All three documents combined make the guidelines/rules for Phase 41. All documents can be found on United Way of Bemidji Area's page concerning the Emergency Food and Shelter Program.

The Emergency Food and Shelter Program began in 1983 with a \$50 million federal appropriation. The program was created by Congress to help meet the needs of hungry and homeless people throughout the United States and its territories by allocating federal funds for the provision of food and shelter.

The program is governed by a [National Board](#) composed of representatives of the [American Red Cross](#); [Catholic Charities, USA](#); [United Jewish Communities](#); [The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.](#); [The Salvation Army](#); and [United Way of America](#). The Board is chaired by a representative of the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) (FEMA).

The program's objectives are:

- to allocate funds to the neediest areas,
- to ensure fast response,
- to foster public/private sector cooperation,
- to ensure local decision making, and
- to maintain minimal, but accountable, reporting.

How Are Emergency Food and Shelter Program Funds Used?

Program funds are used to provide the following, as determined by the Local Board in funded jurisdictions:

- Food, in the form of served meals or groceries.
- Lodging in a mass shelter or hotel.
- Three months' rent or mortgage payment.
- Three months' utility bill.
- Minimal repairs to allow a mass feeding or sheltering facility to function during the program year.
- Equipment necessary to feed or shelter people, up to a \$300 limit per item.

Review Eligible Program Costs and Ineligible Program Costs for specific details.

How is the Program Governed Locally?

Locally, the program is a model of public-private cooperation. Each civil jurisdiction (a county or city) funded by the program must constitute a Local Board. The board must be composed of representatives of the same organizations as those on the [National Board](#), with a local government official replacing the FEMA representative. The Local Board members elect their chair. Local Boards may also have additional members, and, since 1993, Local Boards have been required to include a homeless or formerly homeless person as a member. If a jurisdiction is located within or encompasses a Federally recognized Indian reservation, a Native American representative must be invited to serve on the Local Board.

The National Board awards funds to jurisdictions based upon a [formula](#); in addition, a small portion of the overall award is allocated by formula to [State Set-Aside Committees](#), who then allocate funds to jurisdictions based upon the criteria they feel is most appropriate.

Once an award is made by either the National Board or a State Set-Aside Committee, Local Boards decide which agencies are to receive funds, and then those agencies are paid directly by the National Board. Within a jurisdiction, no more than 2% of the entire award may be used for administrative costs by the Local Board and agencies combined.

How Does My Agency or Organization Apply?

- When a jurisdiction is funded, the Local Board will advertise the availability of funds and open the application process (normally in January). Local organizations, whether nonprofit or governmental, may apply. The Local Board is responsible for considering all applications, and for determining which organizations will receive funds. The Local Board also determines which services are funded.

2024 APPLICATION DEADLINE for Phase 41: Friday, May 24th, 2024, 5 pm

APPLICATIONS THAT ARE INCOMPLETE OR RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED. ALL AWARDS ARE CONTINGENT UPON RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS AND COMPLETION OF ALL OUTSTANDING APPLICABLE REPORTS.

Emergency Food and Shelter Local Board Contact Information (Beltrami County)

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What Documentation for Expenditures is Required?

All funded agencies must retain invoices and canceled checks for all program expenditures. Agencies funded for the first time under the program, and those that have had previous compliance problems, must submit their documentation to the National Board. To help ensure that agencies maintain National Board standards of accountability, National Board staff routinely conduct on-site reviews of agency programs and financial documentation. In addition, any agency may be asked to submit its documentation to the National Board at any time.

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GLOSSARY OF EFSP TERMS

- Award:** the dollar amount allocated to either a jurisdiction as a whole or an individual LRO.
- Begin Date:** the date the LRO can start charging expenses to the program.
- Closeout:** the process by which the National Board determines that all applicable administrative actions and all required work of the award have been completed.
- Disallowed costs:** see ineligible costs.
- Documentation:** canceled checks, invoices, per diem schedules, vouchers, letters, mileage logs or schedules, etc. to support expenditures.
- End Date:** the date by which all funds must be expended.
- Final Report:** annual report filed by each Local Board and LRO of expenditures of program funds.
- Fiscal Agent:** an LRO that maintains all EFSP financial records for another agency.
- Fiscal Conduit:** an LRO that maintains all EFSP financial records for more than one other agency under a single award.
- Ineligible costs:** charges made against EFSP funds that the National Board determines to be ineligible costs in accordance with the legislation.
- Jurisdiction:** city, county or combination receiving funds through EFSP.
- Local Board:** decision making body for each jurisdiction.
- Local Board ID number (#):** the unique number which identifies each Local Board.
- Local Board Chair:** elected head of the Local Board authorized to sign documents on behalf of the jurisdiction.
- Local Board Contact:** person in a jurisdiction serving as the primary point of contact.
- LRO (Local Recipient Organization):** refers to the local private or public agency that will receive any award of funds from the National Board.
- LRO ID number:** the unique number, which identifies each LRO within a jurisdiction.
- Manual (Responsibilities and Requirements):** the written rules and regulations for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program.
- Mass Feeding:** preparation and serving of congregate meals for clients in a program operated by an LRO.
- Mass Shelter:** a facility that has the capacity to provide accommodations for at least 5 clients per night at a single site operated by the LRO.
- National Board:** the governing body responsible for the administration of the EFSP.
- Phase:** the grant cycle.
- Phase Spending Period:** the period of time which a jurisdiction has to spend its entire EFSP award. The spending period may vary for each jurisdiction.
- Second Payment/Interim Report:** the form necessary for the LRO to submit to the Local Board and National Board for release of their second half of an award which reflects their program spending.
- State Set-Aside (SSA) Committee:** the decision making body for each state receiving funds to award to jurisdictions with a need not reflected or greater than reflected in the statistics used by the National Board.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAM COSTS include, but are not limited to:

Food purchases for food banks/pantries and other food providers

For food banks/pantries and other food providers, eligible costs include: Food and/or seeds.

An allowance for maintenance fees charged by food banks may be granted by a Local Board at the prevailing rate. EFSP funds cannot be used to pay such a maintenance fee twice: by a food bank and by the food pantry/LRO it is serving.

Food banks only may operate under EFSP as both vendor and LRO.

NOTE: EFSP funding is intended to provide for basic, nutritional meals on an ongoing basis, not non-nutritive items. The funding is not intended to be used for a singular event, special celebratory events, holiday baskets, etc. Also, limited amounts of dessert items (i.e., cookies, snack food, candy, etc.) used as part of a daily meal plan may be purchased.

(Documentation required: dated receipts/invoices/completed vouchers for food purchased and canceled checks.)

Food purchases for mass feeding

For mass feeding sites, eligible expenditures include: Food (hot meals, groceries, food vouchers). Limited amounts of dessert items (i.e., cookies, snack food, candy, etc.) used as a part of a daily meal plan may be purchased. Also allowable are vegetable seeds and vegetable plants cultivated in an LRO's garden on-site and canning supplies.

(Documentation required: dated receipts/invoices for food/seeds/plant purchases and canceled checks.)

Consumable supplies for mass shelter/mass feeding

Purchase of consumable supplies essential to mass feeding (i.e., plastic cups, utensils, detergent, etc.) and/or mass shelters of five or more beds (e.g., soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, cleaning supplies, etc.).

(Documentation required: dated receipts/invoices for supplies purchased and canceled checks.)

Minor emergency equipment repairs for mass shelters/mass feeding

With prior Local Board approval, minor emergency repair of small equipment essential to mass feeding or sheltering not exceeding \$300.00 in repair costs per item. Equipment eligible for repairs under the EFSP is any that if not repaired would force the mass feeding or mass sheltering site to terminate or curtail services (e.g., stove, refrigerator, and hot water heater).

Routine maintenance and service contracts are not eligible.

(Documentation required: dated letter from Local Board indicating approval and dated receipts or bills for equipment repair and canceled checks.)

Note: Good judgment must be exercised in determining the most cost-effective use of EFSP funds when deciding an equipment purchase against a repair.

Building code repairs to mass shelter or mass feeding facility

Local Board approval for building code repairs

Emergency repairs to comply with building code citations for a mass feeding facility or mass shelter, provided:

- a. The facility is owned by a not-for-profit LRO (profit-making facilities, leased facilities, government facilities and individual residences are not eligible); and
- b. The building code plan and the contract detailing work to be done and material and equipment to be used or purchased is **approved in writing by the Local Board prior to the start of the emergency repair/building code project**; and
- c. The repair is limited to bringing facility into compliance with local building codes; maximum expenditure: **\$2,500.00**; and
- d. All emergency repair work is completed and paid for by the end of the jurisdiction's spending period; and
- e. Facility must be used primarily for mass feeding or sheltering programs; and
- f. No award funds are used for **decorative** or **non-essential** purposes or **routine maintenance/repairs**.

(Documentation required: dated letter from Local Board indicating approval and amount approved, copy of contract including cost or invoices for supplies and contract labor, document citing building code violation requiring the repair and canceled checks.)

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. LRO's total mass shelter award is expended in this manner.

Note: The per diem allowance does not include the additional costs associated with food or the food per meal allowance.

(Documentation required: schedules showing daily rate of \$12.50 and number of persons sheltered by date with totals. Supporting documentation must be retained on-site, e.g., checks/invoices, service records and sign-in logs. A sample Per Diem Schedule is available from United Way.)

Mass feeding expenses - Per meal allowance

Per meal allowance of **exactly \$3 per meal served** if:

- a. Approved in advance by the Local Board; and,
- b. LRO's total mass feeding award is expended in this manner.

The \$3 per meal allowance, if elected, may be expended by the LRO for any related cost; it is not limited to otherwise eligible items. The per meal allowance may be used to cover costs such as rent, utilities, and staff salaries. **The per meal allowance does not include the additional costs associated with shelter or the per diem shelter allowance.**

Note: EFSP funding is intended to provide for daily, basic, nutritional meal costs on an ongoing basis. The funding is not intended to be used for a singular event, special events/celebratory events/holiday meals, etc. Basic non-excessive meal costs may be applied towards special/celebratory/holiday meals served only as part of an ongoing program. Also, only limited amounts of dessert items (i.e., cookies, snack food, candy, etc.) used as part of a daily meal plan may be purchased.

(Documentation required: daily schedule showing meal rate of \$3 and number of meals served by date with totals. Supporting documentation must be retained on-site, e.g., checks/invoices and service records. A sample Per Meal Schedule is available from United Way).

Rent/mortgage assistance/eviction prevention

For rent/mortgage assistance, eligible program costs include:

1. Limited emergency rent or mortgage assistance principal and interest only (P&I), for individuals or households provided conditions "a" through "f" below are met:

Payment is in arrears or due within 5 calendar days;

b. All 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. Payment is limited to a maximum of three month's assistance for each individual or household; assistance can be provided 1) for three month's rent/mortgage (P&I) all at one time, or 2) in separate payments over a period of up to 90 consecutive days so long as the total amount paid does not exceed three month's cost and is paid by a single LRO;

e. Assistance is provided only once by a single LRO in each award phase for each individual/household (with exception of item d [2] above), and;

f. Payment must guarantee an additional 30 days service.

Note: Late fees, legal fees, deposits, and condo fees are ineligible.

Note: If a client has two mortgages, assistance may only be given on the principal or first mortgage for the client's residence.

Note: Payments for trailers and lots are eligible and can be paid to a mortgage company or to a private landlord.

Assistance with rent or a mortgage can be provided in addition to eligible utility and food assistance under this program.

(Documentation required: dated and signed letters from landlords [must include amount of rent and due date] mortgage letters and/or copy of loan coupon showing monthly mortgage amount and date due and canceled checks. Checks must be made payable to landlord ONLY, not to both client and landlord. Documentation must support the payment made and is limited to a maximum of three months' assistance.) Note: A copy of the client's lease is only accepted when paying the first month's rent.

Rent/mortgage assistance/eviction prevention

First month's rent payment

2. 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 payment under item 1 above; and
- b. **Can** be provided in addition to assistance provided for off-site or mass shelter.

Assistance with first month's rent can be provided in addition to eligible utility and food assistance under this program.

(Documentation required: dated and signed letters from landlords or current lease [must include amount of first month's rent and due date] and canceled checks. Documentation must support the payment made and is limited to a maximum of one month's assistance.) Note: First month's rent is the only situation in which the lease is acceptable documentation.

Utility assistance

For utility assistance, eligible program costs include:

1. Limited metered utility assistance (includes gas, electricity, water, and sewer service) for individuals or households. The client is 1) a resident of the home or apartment and 2) is responsible for the utility on the home or apartment where utility assistance is to be paid provided conditions "a" through "f" below are met:
 - a. Payment is in arrears or due within 5 calendar days;
 - b. All other resources have been exhausted (e.g., State's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program);
 - c. Payment is limited **to a maximum of three month's usage** cost for each utility (e.g., gas, electric and water) for each individual or household;
 - d. The month paid is current amount, budget amount **or** part of the arrearage that is still owed at the time of payment and that is either from current award phase or for continuous service prior to award phase that remains past due; and
 - e. Each utility can be paid only once in each award phase for any individual or household; and
 - f. Payment must guarantee an additional 30 days service.

Note: If paying from a past due notice, you must get a breakdown of the monthly usage charges (a copy of current client billing and payment history by month from the utility provider). Where clients have made a partial payment, the payment is generally applied to the oldest past due amount. The entire amount paid by your agency must be a maximum three month amount that is all still past due. Documentation must clearly indicate which month is being paid from the breakdown of monthly charges and must be part of the past due amount still owed. Reconnect fees are eligible. Late fees and deposits are ineligible.

2. Limited non-metered utility assistance (includes oil, firewood, coal) for individuals or households provided conditions “a” through “c” below are met:

- a. All other resources have been exhausted (e.g., State’s Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program).
- b. Payment is limited to a one-time delivery (e.g., the minimum amount of delivery for firewood, minimum gallons of fuel oil).
- c. Each utility can be paid only once in each award phase for any individual or household.

The intent of non-metered utility assistance, like metered utility, is to provide 30 days of service.

Utility assistance can be provided in addition to eligible rent/mortgage assistance under this program.

Note: A maximum of three month's utility usage bill may be paid for a client/household by a single LRO. Multiple LROs **may not** join together and each pay a portion of a single utility bill.

(Documentation required: (1) Metered utilities [e.g., electricity, water], the most recent copy of past due or current utility bill with a breakdown which clearly identifies the charges being paid including due date and canceled checks; (2) Nonmetered utilities [e.g., propane, firewood], receipts/invoices for fuel including due date or delivery date and canceled checks.)

Utility assistance documentation special note

Note: Utility disconnects and termination notices often do not show the amount owed by month. The monthly information must be verified with the utility company (a copy of current client billing and payment history by month from the utility provider) and written onto the notice or metered utility verification form. If one month's service cannot be verified from the bill or with the utility company, the LRO may pay up to \$100 per individual or household provided at least \$100 is owed on the bill. This \$100 is not a cap. If an LRO wishes to pay more than \$100, one month's service **must** be verified as stated above.

(Documentation required: dated copy of disconnect, termination, final or shut-off notices with usage verification if necessary, and canceled checks. Documentation must state which month's usage is being paid from the breakdown of monthly charges.

Metered utility verification form

The National Board encourages the use of the metered utility verification form (along with a copy of the current utility bill) as the preferred method for verifying eligible utility assistance. The

bill must be attached to the metered utility verification form and the information on the bill must support the information completed on the form. ***Documentation must state which month' usage is being paid from the breakdown of monthly charges.***

Diapers

For all service providers, the purchase of diapers is eligible as described below:

- a. For direct distribution to individuals;
- b. For residents of mass shelters;

Note: Local Boards must use discretion in selecting LROs to provide this service, taking into consideration the cost effectiveness of bulk purchasing.

(Documentation required: dated receipts/invoices for diapers purchased and canceled checks.)

INELIGIBLE PROGRAM COSTS:

Purposes for which funds **cannot be used** include, but are not limited to:

1. **CASH PAYMENTS** of any kind including checks made out to cash, or petty cash expenditures.
2. Payments made in any form other than LRO check, LRO vendor issued credit card, or LRO debit card to vendor, never a client.
3. Reimbursements to staff, volunteers, or clients for program purchases. Cash back to client from gift certificates/vouchers,
4. Reimbursement to other LROs or agencies including those agencies under LROs serving as a fiscal agent or fiscal conduit.
5. Fees: No bank fees for check replacements, membership fees to food banks, shopping clubs, etc.
6. Deposits of any kind.
7. Administrative cost reimbursement to state or regional offices of governmental or voluntary organizations.
8. Use of administrative funds for purposes other than administering EFSP.
9. Lobbying efforts.
10. Expenditures made outside jurisdiction's spending period. All award funds must be expended during the current phase begin and end dates.
11. No pre-payment for expenses or services not yet rendered or incurred (i.e., where no goods or services have been provided prior to payment during program period).
12. Telephone costs, salaries, or office equipment by LRO, except as administrative allowance authorized by the Local Board, and limited to the total allowance (2%) of the LRO's award.
13. Rental security deposit or revolving loan accounts.
14. Payments of more than three month's mortgage, first month's mortgage, or down payment on mortgage.
15. Purchase/lease of real property (land or buildings) of any kind.
16. Property taxes of any kind, escrow accounts, insurance, legal fees, or condo fees.
17. Late fees for rent, mortgage, or utility assistance.
18. Payment of more than three month's rent.
19. Payment of more than three month's portion of a utility bill.
20. Payment of more than \$300 per item of essential equipment.
21. Lease-purchase agreement or equipment leases.

22. Emergency building code repairs or rehabilitation to government owned, profit-making facilities or leased facilities or any facility not owned by the LRO.
23. Routine maintenance of LRO facilities, routine maintenance or service contracts on equipment.
24. Construction, rehabilitation or remodeling for expansion of service.
25. Repairs of any kind to an individual's home or apartment. (Repairs can only be made to LRO owned facilities.)
26. Supplies or equipment purchases for an individual's home or private use.
27. Transportation of people **not** related to the direct provision of food or shelter (e.g., to another agency, another city, etc.). Also, transportation to a relative's or friend's home.
28. Gas or repairs for client-owned vehicles, maintenance or repairs to LRO-owned vehicles (e.g., oil, tires, etc.). Also, insurance for LRO-owned or client-owned vehicles.
29. Emergency assistance for disaster victims, supplies bought for or in anticipation of a disaster (i.e., fires of any kind, floods, tornadoes, etc.).
30. Prescription medication, medical supplies, or vitamins.
31. Clothing (except underwear/diapers for clients of mass shelters, if necessary).
32. An LRO may not operate as a vendor for itself or other LROs, except for the shared maintenance fee for food banks.
33. Direct expenses associated with new or expanded services or to prevent closing.
34. Encumbrance of funds; that is, no pre-payments for goods or services not received or not rendered which are paid for prior to the end of the jurisdiction's program.
35. No payments on account.
36. Meal costs in excess of the normal daily basic meal cost.
37. Reserving or withholding funds in anticipation of a future need (e.g., holiday events, holiday baskets, special programs, celebratory events).
38. Staff events/functions/meals of any kind.
39. Supplementing foster care costs, where an LRO has already received payment for basic boarding and feeding of a client. Comprehensive foster care costs beyond food and shelter are not allowed.