

## 19.2 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

### A. INTRODUCTION

The Emergency Assistance Program is used to assist individuals and families in meeting a financial crisis when they are without available resources. The Program is designed to provide short-term emergency financial assistance with which eligible individuals and families may obtain certain items or services needed to eliminate an emergency or crisis. Those who are in need of and qualify for emergency financial assistance may already be participating in an economic or social service program.

Individuals and families who receive emergency financial assistance may also be in need of and be eligible to receive regular ongoing medical, financial and/or social services from the Department.

As contained in the provisions under Title IV-A as established by Section 406(e) of the Social Security Act, federal matching funds are available to assist families with eligible children under the age of 21 who are destitute because they are without immediate resources to meet their needs.

### B. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

#### 1. Emergency Need Requirement

An applicant who meets the definition of being faced with an emergency need is one who:

- Is faced with an existing or imminent crisis of a nature that threatens the physical health, safety, and well-being of the applicant and his family; and
- Is without available resources with which he can immediately eliminate an existing crisis or prevent an imminent crisis.

When the applicant fails to meet either or both requirements indicated above, the application is denied. **See item D below for specific requirements.**

#### 2. Time Limitation

Emergency financial assistance can be authorized during one period of 30 consecutive days in any twelve consecutive months. Payments may be made to meet needs which arose before this thirty-day-period or needs which may extend beyond the thirty day period. The first day of the

**EXAMPLE:** Same situation as above except the landlord does accept HUD. The applicant's rent, once she is approved, will be \$100. This is acceptable alternative housing as it does approximate the current cost and is a reasonable amount for the area.

The Worker must use care in handling this type of situation. Available alternate housing must exist before such negotiations are initiated. Factors affecting the alternate housing, particularly the cost, availability, etc., must be thoroughly evaluated. When alternate housing does exist, the Worker may add the cost of a reasonable deposit to the amount of rent to be authorized not to exceed one month's rent.

**NOTE:** When alternate housing does not exist for individuals who are more than one month delinquent in their rent payments, the Worker may offer payment to avoid the eviction up to a maximum of two month's rent to the original landlord.

As indicated above, no limits are placed on the amount of one month's rent. If either the landlord or client refuses to make arrangements to pay the remaining balance of rent to the landlord, the application is denied.

(2) Security and Damage Deposits

When alternative housing is used, the Worker will authorize payment for one month of rent and a reasonable security and/or damage deposit, if necessary, to the landlord when suitable housing is obtained.

**NOTE:** A reasonable security and/or damage deposit is defined as the amount that is customary to the community up to, but not exceeding the amount of one month of rent.

(3) Mortgage

The Worker must contact the lending institution and first offer payment of the past due interest, not to exceed the total monthly mortgage amount, to eliminate the emergency.

## Emergency And Special Assistance Programs

If the lending institution refuses to prevent foreclosure, the Worker may offer payment of both interest and principal or the total monthly mortgage amount for a maximum payment of one month.

The procedure of alternate housing is not used when the foreclosure of a mortgage is involved. However, if the applicant becomes homeless, as a result of actual foreclosure, the Worker must evaluate his eligibility for an emergency rent or overnight lodging payment as in any homeless applicant situation when the client and his family are actually homeless.

(4) Overnight Lodging

The Worker authorizes payment to the facility at the going per diem weekly or monthly rate up to a maximum of one week of lodging.

When overnight lodging must be extended beyond one week, alternate temporary housing must be explored. If alternate temporary housing cannot be arranged, Supervisory approval must be obtained for payment beyond one week, up to a maximum of 30 days.

2. Utilities And Bulk Fuel

a. Services Covered

The payment of utility services included under the Emergency Assistance Program include those services needed by the AG for heating, cooking, lighting, and sanitation. Telephone service is included only when the AG is in need of telephone service because everyone living in the home is 65 years of age or older, or is disabled or temporarily incapacitated for at least the next 30 days. See Section 12.15,C.

b. General Requirements

Payment may be authorized for clients who are without utility services or who face imminent termination of these services. **When a utility service, other than telephone service, has been disconnected, the application for Emergency Assistance must be made within 30 days of the date the service was terminated**

to meet the emergency need requirement described in item B,1 above. Supervisory approval is required to make an exception to this requirement when the AG is otherwise eligible and the service has been terminated for more than 30 days. Exceptions may only be granted on a case-by-case basis when the extenuating circumstances warrant it. These include, but are not limited to, delayed application due to illness or disability, and other situations that are beyond the client's control. In determining whether or not the applicant is eligible for payment of utility services, the following requirements must be met:

Computation of overdue budget bill:

\$85.50 divided by 243 - \$0.35 x 30 days = \$10.50

Computation of regular overdue bill:

\$150.00 divided by 45 days = \$3.33 x 30 days \$ 99.90  
Amount of payment \$110.40

- When the applicant has made partial payment(s) toward the original overdue bill, the Worker will need to consider the following guidelines:
  - The average daily cost of the original overdue bill must first be computed.
  - The average daily cost multiplied by 30 will equal the maximum amount of payment.

**EXAMPLE:** An applicant submits an overdue utility bill in the amount of \$211.72. This bill was the remainder of an original overdue bill which accumulated over a period of 183 days and totaled \$296.73. The applicant made partial payment of \$85.01 which left a balance of \$211.72.

\$296.73 divided by 183 days = \$1.62 average cost/day.

\$1.62 x 30 = \$48.60 maximum amount of payment.

**NOTE:** Whenever the utility bill balance remaining after the applicant has made partial payment is less than the average cost/day times 30 days, that is the payment amount.

(2) Payment Amount for Telephone Service

When an applicant meets the criteria for telephone services, the Worker authorizes payment only for basic charges for up to 30 days, plus federal tax. Payment is not authorized for long-distance calls, wires or other special services. **There is no time limit for disconnected telephone service when the requirements in item 2,a above are met. However,**

**eligibility for the telephone assistance programs in Sections 19.8 and 19.9 must be explored first.**

(3) Payment Amount for Bottled Gas, Fuel Oil, Coal and Wood

When the applicant uses energy that is not regulated by the Public Service Commission, the Worker must determine the amount of payment by referring to the chart below for a 30-day supply of fuel.

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>MAXIMUM AMOUNT</u>
Bottled Gas	Gallons	135
Bottled Gas	Pounds	300
Coal	Tons	1
Fuel Oils	Gallons	150
Wood	Cords	1

When the client has an emergency need for wood pellets or any other type of bulk fuel not listed in the chart, the Worker will work with the vendor to determine a reasonable amount.

The following statement must be entered on all OFS-67 forms authorizing any type of liquid fuel: "The client must specify the correct grade and type of fuel."

When the provider refuses to make a delivery because of an existing unpaid balance, the Worker must allow the client and provider to determine what item will be paid. Payment cannot be authorized for both items. If the client and vendor agree to payment of the unpaid balance, the amount authorized cannot exceed the equivalent cost of the maximum amount of fuel shown in the chart above.

If either or both parties refuse to accept payment as outlined in this section, the application is denied.

3. Food

Payment may be authorized for applicants who have an emergency need for food. However, in the majority of instances, emergency food needs can be met by using Food Stamp benefits, provided the applicant meets the eligibility requirements of the Food Stamp Program. If the applicant refuses to accept the Food Stamp Program as a resource to meet his emergency food needs, the application for Emergency Assistance is denied.