

# EMERGENCY FOOD AND SHELTER NATIONAL BOARD PROGRAM (EFSP)

## ALLOCATIONS INFORMATION

*Please feel free to duplicate this paper in whole or in part as needed.*

**ALLOCATION PROCESS:** The National Board does not mandate any specific allocation process. It does however, require that all agencies applying for funding be treated consistently. **Local Board membership must have no relationship to funding.** Since member agencies of the Local Board may also apply for funding, *care must be taken that every applicant is judged by common, consistent criteria.* This is a matter of fairness that is crucial to the credibility of the program.

Local Boards must consider all applicant agencies providing or capable of providing services under this program for funding. Although all eligible applicants must be considered, **the Local Board's job is to focus funding so that the most critical needs will be met in the most efficient and effective manner.**

Local Boards may want to consider whether or not an applicant organization is supplying additional resources of its own (e.g., caseworkers, clothing, job training). Local Boards may want to focus funding for a particular service or services in one agency per geographic area to avoid duplication of service.

The Local Board must make all allocation and reallocation decisions. To conform to the philosophy and intent of the EFSP (as directed by Congress), agencies should be selected for funding based on their ability to supplement and extend their operations with funds from the EFSP. EFSP funds are not intended to become a regular and expected part of any agency's operating budget. Neither are these funds intended to make up for budget cuts in other funding sources. Local Boards may consider rotating funds among agencies in order to help the program remain supplemental and may also focus the funding to areas of determined need.

EFSP funds are intended to respond to the changing hunger/homeless needs both nationally and locally; **not to maintain the status quo.** The intent of EFSP funding is to address hunger/homeless needs to make a difference -- not to simply spread dollars among all eligible applicants.

Local Boards should meet prior to receiving applications for funding to assess the changing situation in their jurisdiction with regard to hunger and homelessness. The Local Board should consider such questions as: Has the client mix changed?; Is there a new group of homeless or hungry people?; Are the homeless in the same places that they were last year?; Is housing more or less available?; Are there new funding sources covering a part of the need addressed by the EFSP?; Have new services or agencies developed?, etc . Most importantly, they should ask themselves "How can the limited funds available through the EFSP best be used at this time to address the changing need in our jurisdiction?"

Local Boards should evaluate the needs in their jurisdiction, the resources available to address those identified needs and identify the gaps between the needs and the resources. EFSP funds should be used to fill those gaps in food and shelter services that are eligible under the EFSP.

The National Board encourages Local Boards to have a formal application process. The specific process is determined locally, but the following elements should be considered: written application form/process, limit discussion/presentation on each agency to a pre-determined period of time; provide written notification to each funded agency as well as to agencies not selected. In the written notification to funded agencies, the Local Board may limit an agency's award to specific programs (e.g., only food vouchers, only utility assistance, etc.).

**Please Note:** The National Board guidelines require that an agency, if represented on the Local Board, abstain from voting on its own allocation. Additionally, any Local Board members with a vested interest (board member of, employee of, relative of) in any particular agency's award should also recuse themselves from voting in order to avoid the perception of a conflict of interest.

**ALLOCATIONS AND ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES:** Although the Local Board may fund any agency, it may only fund eligible program expenditures. If an agency's application for funding contains items that the Local Board is unsure of regarding eligibility, the Local Board **must consult with the National Board staff prior to making the allocation decision.** The Local Board may set local guidelines, but local guidelines may not conflict with the National Board's guidelines.

The Local Board decides which agencies to fund and in what program categories the agencies will be funded. The Local Board may limit an agency's expenditures to a specific area of eligibility. Local Boards should indicate in writing the categories in which a specific agency is funded and any limitations the Local Board is imposing. If an agency is permitted to claim the per meal cost for mass feeding, the per diem for mass shelter clients or spend funding on emergency repairs/building code, the Local Board must indicate this in writing, as it requires their approval.

Local Boards that choose to fund homelessness prevention efforts (rent/mortgage, utilities) should consider designating one agency as the central intake point. This makes it easier for families facing eviction to have one initial point of contact. Also it helps set up a network that can share the workload evenly and guard against any fraud or other abuse of the system.

Accessibility to facilities for handicapped individuals is an area of emphasis under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Local Boards should consider small projects (ramps or re-fitting washrooms) that would increase accessibility for the hungry and homeless who are handicapped.

Local Boards that approve emergency repair/building code work to keep a facility open might consider asking for volunteer help from local engineering firms to ensure that the work is done properly (or on the front end, how much work is necessary).

**REALLOCATIONS:** During the course of the program, Local Boards may find it necessary to shift funds from one agency to another or from one service category to another. Local Boards may make reallocations at any time. Reallocations may be made for a variety of reasons (i.e., change in needs of jurisdiction, change in needs of LRO, spending patterns of LROs, misuse of funding).

Local Boards must approve shifts in funding by LROs. The Local Board must inform the National Board in writing of reallocations between LROs. Local Boards may not add new LROs through the reallocation process without approval of the National Board.