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Introduction

This document describes the “Emergency Financial Assistance” category funded through the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP). It serves as a supplement to the Universal Standards of Care document (USOC) also released by the County of Santa Clara HIV Commission and Public Health Department. This document highlights the standards that apply to Emergency Financial Assistance and must be followed by any provider receiving Ryan White funds. The Recipient is responsible for applying these standards through their service contracting process on an ongoing basis at the individual service provider level throughout the funding cycle.

Definition: Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) provides limited one-time or short-term payments to assist the client with an emergent need for paying for essential utilities, housing, food (including groceries, food vouchers, and food stamps), transportation, and medication when other resources are not available. Emergency financial assistance can occur as a direct payment to an agency or through a voucher program.

Purpose: The purpose of Emergency Financial Assistance is to address unexpected needs and support clients in keeping engaged in HIV medical care.

Goals: The goal of Emergency Financial Assistance is to ensure that services are available and accessible to all individuals in need of and eligible for services and to move the client toward self-sufficiency.

Allowable & Unallowable Activities

It is expected that all other sources of funding in the community for emergency financial assistance will be effectively used and that any allocation of RWHAP funds for these purposes will be as the payer of last resort, and for limited amounts, uses, and periods of time. Continuous provision of an allowable service to a client should not be funded through emergency financial assistance. ¹

Allowable Activities:

Allowable uses for Emergency Financial Assistance include the following expenses, only when

1. Other sources of funding cannot be found, and
2. The financial need is critical (i.e. housing or utilities are in danger of being lost as a result of non-payment). This includes:
 - Housing
 - rent deposit
 - motels and hotels, especially when needed for medical reasons
 - Utilities as needed to maintain housing:
 - PG&E or another gas/electric providers
 - EBMUD or other water and sewer providers
 - Garbage collection
 - Food, in form of food bank access or food vouchers
 - Dental care
 - Transportation

Unallowable Activities:

- Direct cash payments to clients are not permitted
- Mortgage payments are not allowed

Requirements

1.0 ARIES

Standards identified in Universal Standards of Care (USOC 1)

2.0 Intake

Standards identified in Universal Standards of Care (USOC 2)

3.0 Recertification

Standards identified in Universal Standards of Care (USOC 3)

4.0 Care and Treatment

4.1 Emergency Financial Assistance Guidelines

	Provider has the responsibility to comply with USOC 4.
4.1.1	Assistance is provided only for allowable utility, food, housing, transportation and medication expenses.
4.1.2	Payments are made either through a voucher program or with short term payment to a landlord or utility agency.
4.1.3	Payments should be made to the service entity with no direct payments to clients.
4.1.4	Emergency funds are allocated, tracked, and reported by type of assistance.
4.1.5	RWHAP funds are used as the payer of last resort.
4.1.6	Confidentiality Protocol: Payment for assistance made to service providers will protect client confidentiality.
4.1.7	Documentation includes evidence of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of assistance provided with dates and methods • Assistance was used for allowable items • RWHAP funds were used as the payer of last resort • Assistance was provided through allowable payment methods • Documentation of payment with copy of check/voucher in client records.

4.2 Eligibility

Key information concerning the client and their financial needs is collected and documented to determine client enrollment eligibility and the need for ongoing EFA.		
4.2.1	Intake: Intake shall take place as soon as possible, at a maximum within five (5) business days of referral or initial client contact.	Documentation of intake See USOC 2
4.2.2	Assessment: Client need and eligibility for emergency financial assistance is assessed and confirmed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate needs are identified. 	Documentation of assessment in client chart.
4.2.3	Timeline: Immediate needs are addressed promptly.	Client chart
4.2.4	Reassessment: Overview of status and on-going needs regarding: Finances/benefits, housing, and transportation	Client chart
4.2.5	Best practices: Prevention/risk reduction issues	Client chart
4.2.6	Referrals: Referrals needed/recommended	Client chart
4.2.7	Protocol: Emergency Financial Assistance Policies and Procedures contain guidelines.	Policies and Procedures

4.3 Care & Treatment

	Standard	Measure
4.3.1	<p>Client Determination: A special needs request must be completed prior to providing emergency financial assistance, with justification of need. Clients must demonstrate an emergent need resulting in their inability to pay. Documentation required may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from agency or landlord • Lease • W9 <p>Provider is responsible of complying with USOC 4.</p>	Documentation of the client's need for emergency financial assistance
4.3.2	Agency staff will assess the problems/needs of the client with an emergency financial issue.	Documentation of needs assessment in client record
4.3.3	Service provider will develop and maintain a Service Plan based on the results of the initial assessment.	Documentation of Service Plan in client records
4.3.4	Client will be assessed for ongoing status and outcome of the Service Plan.	Progress notes
4.3.5	All submitted requests for emergency financial assistance will be approved or denied within three (3) business days . Denials should be authorized by a supervisor	Documentation verified by date of approval or denial no more than three business days after submission.
4.3.6	<p>Alternate Funding Sources</p> <p>Service provider assists client in finding at least one (1) alternate funding source</p>	Documentation of planning sessions with client in which at least one (1) alternate funding source was identified
4.3.7	<p>Distribution of EFA</p> <p>Emergency Financial Assistance will occur as a direct payment to an agency or through a voucher program.</p>	Documentation of assistance and copy of checks/vouchers in client record
4.3.8	<p>Ongoing financial need: The client's needs will be reassessed, and the Service Plan will be updated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This reassessment will occur with every payment made and if needed. 	

5.0 Service Access, Management, and Closure

Standards identified in Universal Standards of Care (USOC 5)

6.0 Grievances

Standards identified in Universal Standards of Care (USOC 6)

7.0 Client Rights, Responsibilities, & Confidentiality

Standards identified in Universal Standards of Care (USOC 7)

8.0 Staff Requirements and Qualifications

Standards identified in Universal Standards of Care (USOC 8)

9.0 Cultural and Linguistic Competency

Standards identified in Universal Standards of Care (USOC 9)

10.0 Fiscal Responsibility

Standards identified in Universal Standards of Care (USOC 10)

11.0 Licensure and Assurance

Standards identified in Universal Standards of Care (USOC 11)

12.0 Continuous Quality Improvement

Standards identified in Universal Standards of Care (USOC 12)

References and Published Guidelines:

1. Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Services: Eligible Individuals & Allowable Uses of Funds. Policy Clarification Notice (PCN) #16-02
2. California State Office of AIDS (OA) a division within California Department of Public Health, Center for Infectious Diseases, last modified August 29, 2012
3. San Jose, CA TGA – Definitions for Eligible Services *Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Extension Act of 2009*, July 1, 2011, “Emergency Financial Assistance”, Page 5.
4. Los Angeles County Commission on HIV, Standards of Care, Direct Emergency Financial Assistance (DEFA) Services, October 12, 2006
http://www.hivcommission-la.info/cms1_051010.pdf
5. Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Services: Eligible Individuals & Allowable Uses of Funds. Policy Clarification Notice (PCN) #16-02
6. Norfolk TGA Ryan White Part A Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) Service Standard January 19, 2017.San Antonio Transitional Grand Area/Health Service Delivery Area Standards of Care for HIV/AIDS Services. January 25, 2018.
7. Minneapolis Ryan White Program Service Area Standards: Emergency Financial Assistance, October 30, 2018.
8. Austin TGA Ryan White Program: Emergency Financial Assistance Standards of Care, March 27, 2018.
9. Marion County Public Health Department Ryan White HIV Services Program Part A/MAI and Part C: Standards of Care for HIV Services March 15, 2017, Pages 52-54.
10. Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Standards of Care for the Oakland Transitional Grant Area, June 2016. Pages 52-53.
11. Boston Public Health Commission, Ryan White Services Division. FY 2019 Standards of Care Boston EMA. Revised March 2019.