



EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SERVICE STANDARDS

IMPORTANT: Service standards must adhere to requirements and restrictions from the federal agency, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The key documents used in developing standards are as follows:

- [Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Services: Eligible Individuals & Allowable Uses of Funds Policy Clarification Notice \(PCN\) #16-02 \(Revised 10/22/18\)](#)
- [HIV/AIDS Bureau, Division of Metropolitan HIV/AIDS Programs National Monitoring Standards for Ryan White Part A Grantees: Program – Part A](#)
- [Service Standards: Ryan White HIV/AIDS Programs](#)

INTRODUCTION

Service standards for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Part A Program (RWP) outline the elements and expectations a service provider should follow when implementing a specific service category. The standards are written for providers and provide guidance on what services may be offered when developing their Ryan White Program Part A programs. The standards set the minimum level of care Ryan White funded agencies should offer to clients, however, providers are encouraged to exceed these standards.

The Los Angeles County Commission on HIV (COH) developed the Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) Service Standards to ensure people living with HIV (PLWH) can apply for **short-term or one-time** financial assistance to assist with emergency expenses. **Short-term is defined as 3 months or less.** The development of the Standards includes guidance from service providers, consumers, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Division of HIV and STD Programs (DHSP), as well as members of the COH Standards & Best Practices (SBP) Committee. All service standards approved by the COH align with the [Universal Service Standards and Client Bill of Rights and Responsibilities](#) (Universal Standards) approved by the COH on January 11, 2024. EFA service providers must also follow the Universal Standards in addition to the standards described in this document.

EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OVERVIEW

EFA provides limited one-time or short-term payments to assist a Ryan White Part A client with an urgent need for essential items or services due to hardship. Short-term is defined as 3 months or less. The purpose of emergency financial assistance is to ensure clients can pay for critical services that play a role on a client's ability to stay engaged in medical care and/or adhere to treatment. **EFA is a needs-based assistance program, not a government**

entitlement, subject to the availability of funding. EFA must occur as a direct payment to an agency (e.g. organization, landlord, vendor) or through a voucher program. Direct cash payments to clients are not permitted. Based on capacity and contract guidance from DHSP, an agency may provide EFA services if the client presents with an emergency need that cannot first be met through the appropriate Ryan White Service Category. Support to clients should be offered while the client’s application is under review/processing and whether they qualify or not, they should always be linked to case management or benefits specialty services for continuity of support.

EFA is not meant to be a continuous means of support; rather, it is meant to be provided with limited frequency and for limited periods of time and is based on the availability of funds. EFA should only be provided for an urgent or emergency need for essential items or services necessary to improve health outcomes. **Agencies are responsible for referring clients to the appropriate Ryan White service category related to the need for continuous provision of services and non-emergency situations.**

An emergency is defined as:

- Unexpected event that hinders ability to meet housing, utility, food, medication need
- Unexpected loss of income
- Experiencing a crisis situation that hinders ability to meet housing, utility, food, or medication need
- Public health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, that severely disrupt national systems of care, employment, and safety net. Contracted agencies must follow DHSP and HRSA guidelines on special use of EFA in times of public health emergencies.

EFA may not be used for:

- Ongoing or annual payments for any services or goods for clients
- Direct cash payments to clients
- Activities that can be paid for under another Ryan White service category

TABLE 1. CATEGORIES FOR DETERMINING EMERGENCY NEEDS AND RYAN WHITE SERVICES

Emergency Need	Ryan White Service Category
Short term rental assistance	Housing Services
Move-in assistance	
Essential utility assistance	
Emergency food assistance	Nutrition Services
Transportation	Transportation
Medication assistance to avoid lapses in medication	Ambulatory Outpatient Medical

KEY COMPONENTS

EFA services provide a Ryan White Par A client with limited one-time or short-term financial assistance due to hardship. Short term is defined as 3 months or less. Agencies will establish program services based on agency capacity and DHSP contract requirements. EFA is decided on a case-by-case basis by a case manager or social worker and is subject to the availability of funding. Financial assistance is never paid directly to clients but issued via checks or vouchers to specific vendors or agencies.

Agencies and staff will make every effort to reduce the amount of documentation necessary, while staying within funding and contract requirements, for a client in need of emergency financial assistance. A signed affidavit declaring homelessness should be kept on file for clients without an address.

Although these standards include information for all EFA categories, some categories may be prioritized in response to need and funding availability. Additionally, to ensure equitable access, caps may be put into place for the maximum funding amount that may be requested per application and/or the number of requests an individual may make.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Agencies coordinating EFA will follow eligibility requirements for potential clients based on DHSP guidance and the type of financial assistance the client is seeking. Clients may enter EFA services through self-referral or referral by a case management or another provider. Each client requesting EFA will be subject to eligibility determination that confirms the need for services. Programs coordinating EFA are responsible to determine such eligibility. Eligibility documentation should be appropriate to the requested financial assistance and completed annually, at minimum, or for every instance a client seeks emergency financial assistance.

Eligibility criteria includes:

- Los Angeles County resident
- Verification of HIV positive status
- Current proof of income
- EFA application based on the type of assistance the client is requesting.

In addition to the general Ryan White eligibility criteria, priority should be given to individuals who present an emergency need with the appropriate documentation that qualifies as an emergency, subject to payor of last resort requirements. When accessing EFA funds, clients must work with case managers or other service providers to develop a plan to avoid similar

emergencies in the future. Case managers should make efforts to transition clients to more permanent and/or long-term services.

REFERRALS

All service providers must work in partnership with the client, their internal care coordination team and external providers, both Ryan White funded and non-Ryan White funded sites, to ensure appropriate and timely service referrals are made according to client’s needs.

In addition, agencies and staff are responsible for linking clients to care if they are not in care as well as addressing the conditions that led to the emergency need to ensure accessing EFA is a one-time need or rare occurrence. For clients accessing EFA services, staff is responsible for referring clients to a program with a case manager or Medical Care Coordination provider if they are not linked already.

STAFFING REQUIREMENT AND QUALIFICATIONS		
STANDARD		DOCUMENTATION
1.1	Agencies will hire staff with experience in case management in an area of social services or experience working with people living with HIV. Bachelor’s degree in a related field preferred.	Staff resumes on file.
1.2	Staff are required to seek other sources of financial assistance, discounts, and/or subsidies for clients requesting EFA services to demonstrate Ryan White funding is the payor of last resort (See <i>Appendix A</i> for a list of additional non-Ryan White resources).	Lists of other financial sources, discounts, and/or subsidies for which the staff applied for the client on file.
1.3	Staff are required to connect clients to or provide referrals for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A case manager for a needed service or for Medical Care Coordination • Wraparound services to empower clients and prevent future use of EFA services • Opportunities for trainings such as job or workforce trainings 	Lists of referrals the staff provided to the client. Name of case manager(s) client connects with in client file.
ELIGIBILITY		

STANDARD		DOCUMENTATION
2.1	<p>Agency will determine client eligibility for EFA at minimum annually, or for every instance a client requests EFA. Eligible uses may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term housing rental assistance • Essential utility assistance • Emergency food assistance • Transportation • Medication assistance to avoid lapses in medication • Mortgage Assistance • Rental Security deposits <p>*Continuous provision of service or non-emergency needs should fall under the appropriate Ryan White service category and not under EFA.</p>	<p>Documentation of emergency need and eligible use in client file.</p> <p>Documentation of Ryan White eligibility requirements in client file.</p>
HOUSING ASSISTANCE		
STANDARD		DOCUMENTATION
3.1	<p>Eligible clients must provide evidence they are a named tenant under a valid lease or legal resident of the premises.</p> <p>If rental assistance is needed beyond an emergency, please refer to Housing Services.</p>	<p>Documentation in client file that demonstrates emergency need and type of assistance received.</p> <p>Application for Housing Assistance includes a notice from landlord stating past due rent or, in the case of new tenancy, amount of rent and security deposit being charged.</p>
UTILITY ASSISTANCE		
STANDARD		DOCUMENTATION
4.1	<p>Eligible clients must provide evidence they have an account in their name with the utility company or proof or responsibility to make utility payments.</p> <p>Limited to past due bills for gas, electric, or water service.</p>	<p>Documentation in client file that demonstrates emergency need and type of assistance received.</p> <p>Application for Utility Assistance includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the most recent bill in client name or a signed affidavit with the

	Staff is responsible for checking client eligibility for SoCal Edison assistance program	name of the individual that is responsible for paying the bill. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the lease that matches the address from the bill • Proof of inability to pay
FOOD ASSISTANCE		
STANDARD		DOCUMENTATION
5.1	Limited to gift card distribution to eligible clients by medical case managers or social workers at their discretion and based on need and funding availability. Staff is responsible for referring clients to a food pantry and/or CalFresh.	Documentation in client file that demonstrates emergency need and type of assistance received.
TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE		
STANDARDS		DOCUMENTATION
6.1	Eligible clients must provide evidence they need transportation to/from appointments related to core medical and support services.	Documentation in client file that demonstrates emergency need and type of assistance received.
MEDICATION ASSISTANCE		
STANDARDS		DOCUMENTATION
7.1	Eligible clients must provide evidence they are need of medication assistance to avoid a lapse in medication.	Documentation in client file that demonstrates emergency need and type of assistance received.

APPENDIX A: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

The list below is a starting point for EFA service provider staff of additional resources to assist clients with emergency needs. Please note it is not a comprehensive list of available resources in Los Angeles County and staff are encouraged to seek other resources for client care.

211 Los Angeles

<https://www.211la.org/>

Phone: Dial 2-1-1

Los Angeles Housing + Community
Investment Department, City of Los
Angeles (HCIDLA)

Housing Opportunities for Persons with
HIV/AIDS (HOPWA)

<https://hcidla.lacity.org/people-with-aids>

Comprehensive Housing Information &
Referrals for People Living with HIV/AIDS
(CHIRP LA)

<http://www.chirpla.org/>

Los Angeles Housing Services Authority

<https://www.lahsa.org/get-help>

Department of Public Social Services, Los
Angeles County

<http://dpss.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dpss/main/programs-and-services/homeless-services/>

CalWorks - Monthly financial assistance for
low-income families who have children
under 18 years old

<https://yourbenefits.laclrs.org>

Los Angeles Regional Food Bank – Free and
low-cost food

www.lafoodbank.org/get-help/pantrylocator

Project Angel Food

<https://www.angelfood.org/>

Los Angeles Department of Water and
Power (LADWP) – Low Income Discount
Program or Lifeline Discount Program for
Utility Bill Assistance

Phone: (213) 481-5411

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance
Program (HEAP) – Utility Bill Assistance

<http://www.csd.ca.gov/Services/FindServicesinYourArea.aspx>

Phone: (866) 675-6623

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

<https://www.phfewic.org/>

Veterans of Foreign Wars – Unmet Needs
Program

<https://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants>

City of West Hollywood HIV/AIDS
Resources

<https://www.weho.org/services/social-services/hiv-aids-resources>

The People’s Guide to Welfare, Health &
Services

<https://www.hungeractionla.org/peoplesguide>