

EMERGENCY FOOD AND SHELTER PROGRAM

of Houston/Fort Bend and Harris Counties
and Waller County



Local Board Handbook for Phase 39 and Any Concurrent Phases

The Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) was created in 1983 to supplement and expand the work of local social service agencies, both nonprofit and governmental, in an effort to help people with economic emergencies (not disaster-related [i.e., fires of any kind, floods, tornadoes, etc.] emergencies). Therefore, EFSP funds are not to be used to provide emergency assistance for circumstances that are the immediate result of a disaster situation. EFSP funds may be used to provide economic assistance in the long term, even if the current circumstances may have been impacted by an earlier disaster occurrence. The EFSP funding is open to all organizations helping hungry and homeless people. EFSP funds must be used to supplement feeding, sheltering (including transitional sheltering) and rent/mortgage and utility assistance efforts only.

EFSP is governed by a National Board that selects jurisdictions for funding. Local Boards are convened in those qualifying jurisdictions to determine the highest need and best use of funds and to select Local Recipient Organizations (LROs) that will provide emergency food and shelter services. Each year, needs are to be assessed in an effort to respond to changes in the community.

This handbook serves as a guide that will be used in conjunction with the Phase Manual released by the National Board. The handbook serves the Local Board for the Houston/Fort Bend/Harris County (782800) and Waller County (843200) jurisdictions. It will be reviewed and signed by the Board Chair annually. Amendments can be made as needed throughout the year, but quorum must be present for all changes or additions to the handbook.

Date of Approval

Local Board Chair Signature

EFSP Local Board Policies and Procedures

This handbook serves as a guide that will be used in conjunction with the Phase Manual and addendums released by the National Board. The handbook serves the Local Board for the Houston/Fort Bend/Harris County (782800) and Waller County (843200) jurisdictions. It will be reviewed and signed by the Board Chair annually.

Local Board Leadership Roles

The below roles will be voted on at the first meeting of the calendar year. These roles will serve for one calendar year.

- Local Board Chair
- Local Board Vice-Chair
- Local Board Coordinator

For the Phase 39 and any concurrent phases, the below roles have been voted on and will be filled by:

Local Board Chair	Zach Bell
Local Board Vice-Chair	Natalie Wood
Local Board Coordinator	Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (ACAM)

Local Board Required Seats

A local representative of the agencies listed below will be invited to sit on the board at the beginning of the calendar year by the Local Board Coordinator. Proper documentation of all invitations must be kept by the Local Board Coordinator to document that appropriate outreach was conducted for involvement in the EFSP Local Board. If a local agency of the below entities is not available, refer to the active Phase Manual released by the National Board for insight for appropriate alternates.

Additional seats could be added, however, once these seats have been accepted, they or their alternates will act as the quorum for the calendar year and will require in-person or telephone attendance at all Local Board meetings for voting.

- American Red Cross
- Catholic Charities
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (The highest-ranking government official or their designee will replace the FEMA Member.)
- Homeless or Formerly Homeless Representative
- National Council of the Churches of Christ
- The Jewish Federation
- The Salvation Army
- United Way

For Phase 39 and any concurrent phases, the Local Board Required Seats will be filled by the below:

American Red Cross	Ebony Fowler
Catholic Charities	Natalie Wood
Government Official – Harris County	Christy Lambright

Homeless/Formely Homeless Representative	Cristina Salgado
Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston (NCCC replacement)	Maria Magee
The Jewish Federation	Jessica Segal, Jackie Fisherman
The Salvation Army	Zach Bell
United Way	Erin Trytten

Each award phase is new; therefore, the Local Board is a new entity in every phase. The convener of the Local Board must ask each National Board designated agencies to designate or re-designate a representative every program year. Other invited agencies must also designate or re-designate a representative each year. Each agency represented on the Local Board should have an alternate from their agency to attend meetings when the designated board member is unable to attend. The members of the Local Board must elect a chair each award Phase.

At all meetings of the Local Board, the presence of a majority of the members shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The act of a majority of the members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Local Board. Meetings of the Local Board may be held by means of a remote electronic communications system. The Board shall keep regular minutes of its proceedings.

Agencies are represented on Local Boards and each agency is entitled to one vote. Each agency must name a representative to the Local Board although other individuals may also attend meetings. When voting, only the official representative (or designated alternate) may vote on behalf of the organization.

Local Board members must abstain from voting on award applications for their own agency. Local Board members do not have to abstain from voting on award applications based on religious or other affiliations.

Local Board Additional Seats

In an effort to expand and broaden community input, local government representation of the areas encompassed by the Houston/Fort Bend/Harris County (782800) and Waller County (843200) jurisdictions and other community partners will be invited annually to sit on the board at the beginning of the calendar year by the Local Board Coordinator. Proper documentation of all invitations must be kept by the Local Board Coordinator to document that appropriate outreach was conducted for involvement in the EFSP Local Board.

The below seats will be invited by the Local Board Coordinator. They or their alternates will require in-person or telephone attendance at all Local Board meetings to exercise their vote on EFSP matters.

- City of Houston
- City of Pasadena
- Fort Bend County
- Waller County
- Coalition for the Homeless

For the Phase 39 and any concurrent phases, the Local Board Additional Seats will be filled by:

City of Houston	
City of Pasadena	Veronica Galvez

Fort Bend County	Najat Elsayed
Waller County	
Coalition for the Homeless	Anna Rausch

Local Board Meeting Frequency

The National Board requires Local Boards to select one of the following options for meetings during the Phase and specify such in the required materials (Local Board Plan Certification and Final Report submission). Meetings may be conducted via conference calls. The Local Board will vote on the meeting frequency and dates for the calendar year at the first Local Board meeting of the calendar year.

- QUARTERLY MEETINGS: The National Board encourages Local Boards to meet quarterly to monitor the program and ensure LROs are implementing the program according to guidelines.
- SEMI-ANNUAL MEETINGS: Local Boards electing to meet semi-annually must also monitor the program and ensure LROs are implementing the program according to guidelines. Local Boards electing to hold meetings semi-annually must submit copies of their meeting minutes with the jurisdiction’s Final Report. Failure to return this information may result in the delay of any future funding to the jurisdiction.

The local board will meet quarterly, but not less than semiannually, generally on the third Wednesday of the month:

February	February 23, 2022
May	May 18, 2022
August	August 17, 2022
October	October 19, 2022

Local Board Funding Priorities

The Local Board will only fund those activities deemed eligible by the EFSP National Board. Identifying local priorities will assist the Local Board in disseminating the EFSP funds to supplement and expand the work of local social service agencies, both nonprofit and governmental, in an effort to help people with economic emergencies (not disaster-related [i.e., fires of any kind, floods, tornadoes, etc.] emergencies).

Local Board Funding Priorities will be voted on at the first meeting of the calendar year and will be in effect for the calendar year. These priorities will assist the local board in prioritization for award and reallocation funding.

Eligible EFSP Activities are:

- Mass Shelter
- Other Food
- Rent/Mortgage Assistance
- Served Meals
- Utility Assistance
- Administration (reserved for the Local Board)

For the Phase 39 and any concurrent phases, the Funding Priorities are:

1 - Homelessness Prevention (Rent/Mortgage, Utility Assistance)	50%
2 – Food (Other Food, Served Meals)	30%
3 – Emergency Shelter (Mass Shelter)	18%
4 - Administration	2%

Coordination of Services

In order to coordinate services within our jurisdiction, Local Recipient Organizations (LROs) that provide Mass Shelter, Rent/Mortgage Assistance, and/or Utility Assistance are required to use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The Coalition for the Homeless manages and coordinates the training and upkeep of this system. All local agencies receiving funds for Mass Shelter, Rent/Mortgage Assistance and/or Utility Assistance must abide by the business rules and requirements of having access to HMIS. Information must be entered into HMIS within 48 hours of service provision.

Those agencies specifically identified as Domestic Violence Service Providers are exempt from the HMIS requirement, however, they should use a comparable database for the expenditure categories of Mass Shelter, Rent/Mortgage Assistance and Utility Assistance as necessary.

Please visit <https://www.homelesshouston.org/hmis-v2> to review information about HMIS, register for trainings, and establish EFSP funded programs.

Application and Award Threshold Amounts

The Local Board has determined that applicants must apply for **no less than \$10,000 per funding area** (i.e. homelessness prevention, food, emergency shelter) and that the **minimum total award amount is \$10,000**. (Note: Organizations are encouraged to apply for more than \$10,000, as the allocation methodology may cause applications for \$10,000 to fall below the threshold and be disqualified.)

Application Scoring and Fund Allocation

Completed applications are scored by three individual scorers. Each scorer provides a single score for the entire application, using a supplied rubric to evaluate completeness, clarity, and feasibility in five areas: agency information (15 pts), project information (30 pts), client/homeless involvement (5 pts), financial information (25 pts), and intake procedures (20 pts). An additional 5 pts are given for meeting threshold. The Local Board also reserves the right to award bonus points based on performance in previous EFSP phases. All eligible activities receive the same comprehensive score (e.g., rent/mortgage assistance *and* other food receive the same score). The application's three scores are averaged and the averages are ranked within the three funding priority areas to determine allocations. **The Local Board has determined not to fund any applications that receive an average score below 70.**

As the overall funding request generally exceeds the regional allocation, the Local Board has developed an allocation methodology to scale the requested amount to the regional allocation amount. Local Board Funding Priorities are determined annually and guide the local board in the prioritization of awards. Using the approved funding priorities (homelessness prevention: 50%; food assistance: 30%; emergency shelter: 18%), the Local Board divides the regional allocation amount into three separate funding areas.

As outlined above, the scored and averaged LRO applications are ranked within each requested funding area. Next, the Local Board calculates a total request per funding area; again, this total request generally exceeds the available allocation amount. Then, the Local Board uses the LRO’s average score as a percentage to scale down their individual request. For example, if LRO #1 requested \$65,000 for shelter and their average score was 95, their scaled request would be \$61,750 (or 95% of their original request).

At this point, the Local Board calculates the total scaled request per funding area. If the scaled request amount still exceeds the available allocation amount, an additional scaling must occur. The Local Board determines what percentage the available allocation amount is of the scaled request amount and uses the percentage to scale down each individual LRO request again. For example, if the available allocation amount is \$100,000 but the scaled request amount is still \$125,800, the available amount is 79.5% of the scaled request amount. LRO #1’s scaled request of \$61,750 is scaled down to \$49,086 (or 79.5% of their scaled request). The first scale-down takes the individual LRO’s average score into account, while the second scale-down is the same for each LRO in the particular funding area.

Shelter							
LRO Name	Activity	Amt. Requested	Avg. Score	Avg Score as Percent	Request x Avg Score as Percent	RxASP Scaled to Allocation Amount	Rounded to Whole Dollars
LRO #1	Mass Shelter	\$ 65,000.00	95.0	95.0%	\$ 61,750.00	\$ 49,085.85	\$ 49,086.00
LRO #2	Mass Shelter	\$ 70,000.00	91.5	91.5%	\$ 64,050.00	\$ 50,914.15	\$ 50,914.00
LRO #3	Mass Shelter	\$ 45,000.00	89.0	89.0%	\$ 40,050.00	\$ 31,836.25	\$ 31,836.00
LRO #4	Mass Shelter	\$ 50,000.00	78.0	78.0%	\$ 39,000.00	\$ 31,001.59	\$ 31,002.00
LRO #5	Mass Shelter	\$ 50,000.00	65.0		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Request:		\$ 135,000.00			\$ 125,800.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
To Allocate:		\$100,000			79.5%		

In the case that an LRO’s scaled request falls below the minimum \$10,000 total award threshold, the application will be disqualified. Applicants are encouraged to take the allocation methodology into consideration when determining their funding request.

The local board will consider prior performance of LROs that are re-applying for consideration of funding. LROs that expended all funds (without a reallocation to another organization) in their last completed Phase will receive 5 bonus points.

(a) To collect information on an organization’s past EFSP expenditures, a question in the budget section of the application would ask if the organization expended all funds in last 2 Phases. Application reviewers should consider this information (provided by applicant and verified by ACAM) to determine overall capacity of the organization to do the work.

(b) As a result of our allocation methodology, receiving bonus points will directly affect the dollar amounts of future allocations by impacting an LRO’s overall average score. Bonus points are added from the overall average score of the application. (Reminder: allocations are tied to overall average scores before being scaled for funding availability.)

Appeals Process

If during the competition an agency feels as if a decision was made unjustly, they may consult the grievance procedure posted with the competition documents. Leadership of the Coordinating Agency, and if necessary, the Local Board will respond to grievance claims.

Local decision-making is an operating principle of this emergency effort. If the Local Board cannot handle an appeal locally, the case should be referred in writing to the National Board, including details on action that has been taken. Only when there are significant questions on the part of the Local Board concerning misapplication of guidelines, fraud, or other abuse on the part of the Local Board will the National Board consider action.

Should anyone have reason to suspect that EFSP funds are being used for purposes contrary to the law and guidelines governing this program, the National Board staff must be notified immediately. A detailed follow-up letter of actions taken should be forwarded as soon as possible to Emergency Food and Shelter Program, 701 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA, 22314. When reports have been made to the DHS OIG, the case number they provide must be included with all correspondence to the National Board. The OIG's preferred method for reporting fraud is to submit their online allegation form from their website www.oig.dhs.gov. The address for mailing information is:

DHS Office of Inspector General/ MAIL STOP 0305
Attention: Office of Integrity & Quality Oversight – Hotline
245 Murray Lane SW
Washington, DC 20528-0305

Payments to Selected LROs

Payments will be made on the EFSP National Board's timeline pending clearance of all compliance exceptions and document requests including the LRO certification form the EFT form. All new LROs must acquire and submit a DUNS number directly to the National Board before they can receive any payment. The EFSP National Board determines all spending periods and LRO expenditures must occur within the spending period. The Local Board may be granted the option to extend spending periods at a later date.

Rent/Mortgage Assistance Requirements

Since EFSP assistance for Rent/Mortgage must guarantee that a client remains housed for an additional 30 days *and* clients may only receive EFSP assistance once per phase, the Local Board requires all agencies awarded Rent/Mortgage Assistance to provide service equal to one month's rent/mortgage. To ensure adherence to this requirement, agencies must use EFSP funds exclusively to pay the full month's rent up to current Fair Market Rental (FMR) rate for the unit. (Do not factor in utilities when calculating FMR for this purpose.) Agencies may not combine EFSP funds with another funding source to meet this requirement. However, agencies may provide one month's assistance in excess of FMR by using EFSP funds to pay the FMR portion and additional funds to pay the remaining balance. For the latest FMR, please visit https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr/fmrs/FY2022_code/select_Geography.odn select Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX HUD Metro from the dropdown menu.

LROs should also use the one month's rent requirement and current FMR rates to correctly estimate the cost of their EFSP funding request. For example, if an LRO intends to provide service for 20 households (all two-bedroom units) and the current FMR for a two-bedroom unit is \$1,208, the LRO should request \$24,160.

Per Diem Allowance for Mass Shelter

Each Local Board must choose between the \$7.50/\$12.50 per diem rates for Mass Shelter. This rate will be voted on at the first meeting of the calendar year. This rate will be the Per Diem Rate for the calendar year.

The \$7.50 or \$12.50 rates, if elected, may be expended by the LRO for any cost related to the operation of the mass shelter; it is not limited to otherwise eligible items. The per diem allowance may be used to cover costs such as shelter rent, shelter utilities, and shelter staff salaries if necessary to provide a night of shelter. The per diem allowance does not include the additional costs associated with food or the food per meal allowance.

For the Phase 39 and any concurrent phases, **the Local Board sets the Per Diem Allowance at \$12.50.**

Per Meal Allowance for Served Meals

For mass feeding facilities, there are two options for eligible costs. One option must be selected at the beginning of the program year by the Local Board; eligible LROs must then use only one method throughout the entire spending phase. The two options are:

- 1) *Direct Costs* - LROs may use EFSP funds to purchase eligible food items and supplies essential to prepare meals onsite in a mass feeding facility.
- 2) *Per Meal Allowance* - LROs may use the allowance to cover operational costs as well as direct expenditures. A per meal allowance of **exactly \$2.00 per meal** may be used if approved by the Local Board, AND if the LRO's total expenditures are accounted for using this method. Eligible costs within the per meal allowance include operational costs such as the agency's rent/mortgage, utilities, and staff salaries. Supplies eligible under the Direct Cost option are also eligible.

For the Phase 39 and any concurrent phases, **the Local Board elects to use the Per Meal Allowance of \$2.00.**

Monitoring Standards

The Local Board requires that each LRO submit quarterly reports of EFSP activities and expenditures for monitoring purposes. Reports are due the 10th day after the close of each quarter to efsp@acamweb.org. For example, if the spending period begins on June 1, the first quarter runs from June 1 to August 31. Thus, the first quarterly report is due on September 10. All reports will be used to inform reallocations and future application processes. If more than 10% of the award has not been spent by the second quarterly report, a reallocation of funds might be required

In addition to the reporting document, LROs offering mass shelter, rent/mortgage assistance, and/or utility assistance are expected to download and submit a quarterly HMIS Service Summary report for EFSP activities. All organizations offering these services are required to enter program data into HMIS. Please visit www.homelesshouston.org/hmis-v2 to review all information about HMIS, register for trainings, and establish EFSP Funded programs. Be advised that new user training is required for each agency representative entering data into the HMIS system.

Consideration of continued EFSP funding will be based on funding availability as well as satisfactory performance by LROs. Performance factors assessed by the Local Board will include but are not limited to:

- Adherence to EFSP regulations
- Achieving program outcomes and maintaining budgetary targets
- Expenditures of funds by program end date
- Accurate and on-time submission of reports
- Accurate submission of program audit materials
- Adherence to the audit timetable

EFSP HMIS Service Summary Reports

LROs offering mass shelter, rent/mortgage assistance, and/or utility assistance are expected to download and submit a quarterly HMIS Service Summary report for EFSP activities. To produce this report:

1. Log into HMIS.
2. You should see the Home Workspace menu on the left.
3. Click Reports on the left. It is below the “My ClientTrak” option.
4. Click Service Reports - you should see a pop-up list.
5. Click Service Summary, and the Service Summary Report settings screen will be displayed.
6. Here you will need to make some selections and leave others blank:
 - a) Date Range (i.e., Q1: 1/1/20-3/31/20)
 - b) Program(s): click the “Filter by Program(s)” box and select the correct program. For example, ACAM EFSP Phase 37 or ACAM EFSP CARES.
 1. If you have a grant for multiple phases, you will have to run the Service Summary Report two times, once for each phase.
 - c) Grants: click the “Filter by Grant(s)” box and select the correct corresponding grant. This should match the selected Program. For example, “ACAM CARES EMERGENCY SHELTER” or “ACAM Phase37 Emergency Shelter” grant. (The Program and Grant must match in order to run the report correctly.)
 - d) Skip ALL the remaining filters (services, user, housing status, client age range, state, county, zip codes, etc.)
7. Click the “Report” button at the bottom of the screen to run the report.
8. A report will display. Next, click on the export icon (looks like a disk) and select PDF.
9. In the lower left corner, a pop-up will appear. Then click open to open the PDF.
10. Save the document and use the naming format **short LRO number-organization initials-EFSP Phase-Quarter X** (i.e., 013TSA - EFSP Ph37 - Q1).
11. Please submit the HMIS Service Summary with the quarterly Excel workbook to efsp@acamweb.org.

Again, only those organizations with funding designated for rent/mortgage assistance, utility assistance, and/or mass shelter must submit the HMIS Service Summary Report alongside the quarterly Excel workbook reports. All Domestic Violence organizations are exempt from submitting the HMIS Service Summary Reports.

Additional Addendum: Prioritizing Efficient Spending in Future EFSP Phases

(Voted and Approved 8/18/21)

Full Expenditures of EFSP Funds: LROs that expended all funds (without a reallocation to another organization) in their last completed Phase will receive 5 bonus points.

- (a) To collect information on an organization's past EFSP expenditures, a question in the budget section of the application would ask if the organization expended all funds in last 2 Phases. Application reviewers should consider this information (provided by applicant and verified by ACAM) to determine overall capacity of the organization to do the work.
- (b) As a result of our allocation methodology, receiving bonus points will directly affect the dollar amounts of future allocations by impacting an LRO's overall average score. Bonus points are added from the overall average score of the application. (Reminder: allocations are tied to overall average scores before being scaled for funding availability.)