

**Palm Beach County
Community Services Department
Guidance for
COVID-19 Related Emergency Rental, LIHEAP, EHEAP & Utility Assistance**

Date: 4/8/2020

Community Services Department

Purpose:

The purpose of the COVID-19 Related Rental & Utility Assistance Guidance is to provide information to all stakeholders to assist individuals and families who are experiencing an economic hardship related to COVID-19. The economic hardship may be due to loss of employment, loss of hours of employment, sickness, or any other direct or indirect cause due to COVID-19.

Resources:

County residents that are eligible, can still access emergency rental and utility assistance online by visiting our website or by calling the following phone numbers:

- Online application for all services including rent and utilities: www.pbcgov.com/OSCARSS
- Phone number for rent: 561-904-7900
- Phone number for utilities: 561-355-4792
- Phone number for seniors EHEAP: 561-355-4746

For now, the courts have temporarily suspended hearings on evictions and a moratorium has been placed on utility shutoffs. However, we are encouraging residents to ACT NOW to ensure they are positioned to receive their federal stimulus checks and have the ability to budget responsibly to ensure their rent/mortgage and utilities are paid. Please visit our website for more information about how to prepare and budget.

Website: www.pbcgov.com/communityservices

Legal Access Services:

Legal Aid of Palm Beach County is providing information and resources related to COVID-19 on their website:

<https://legalaidpbc.org/information-and-resources/>

COVID-19 Related Services- ELIGIBILITY GUIDANCE FOR ALL PROGRAMS

Eligibility criteria, such as Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPLG) will remain the same for each individual program. However, due to COVID-19 crisis, additional provisions related to client documentation have been added to make it easier to determine eligibility for all CSD Programs. The below provisions apply to all services/programs listed in this document.

- I. Disaster/Crisis-related unemployment may create circumstances where many individuals or families that may not have been eligible for assistance prior to the disaster/crisis may now be eligible. CSD

will use the following three possible approaches to comply with income eligibility, in the event where paystubs or “lay-off letter” cannot be provided:

1. "Presumptive eligibility" determinations are based on unemployment (unemployment application) http://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/reemployment-assistance-center/paper-applications/reemployment-assistance-application-eng.pdf?sfvrsn=9f1d47b0_2
2. The use of short, signed declarations or affidavits of eligibility ([Declaration of Zero Income Form](#))
3. Accepting eligibility certification paperwork from another Federal or State program (DCF or Housing Information)

II. Clients must reside in Palm Beach County.

III. Clients on subsidized housing programs do not qualify for rental assistance, unless only applying for a rental deposit. Proof from the Housing Agency will be requested. Clients applying for utility assistance will qualify for benefits minus their utility reimbursement amount.

Community Action Program

Benefit Limits:

In any combination, the maximum benefit per household combining both **CSBG** and **LIHEAP** programs is \$2,000. This limit applies to emergency-related benefits per household for expenses incurred because of COVID-19. Benefits provided under this guidance do not waive eligibility criteria.

Example 1: A client that receives \$600 in LIHEAP services can be eligible for up to \$1,400 under the CSBG program.

Example 2: A client that receives Home Energy and Crisis benefits of \$1,000 can be eligible for up to \$1,000 in additional funds under the CSBG program.

Event-Specific Services:

Eligible services include, but are not limited to:

CSBG

Emergency Services

Emergency and Permanent Housing Deposit

Rental Assistance

Utility Assistance (including reconnection costs, fees required to assure resumption of services, and utility deposit)

LIHEAP

Utility Assistance

Utility Reconnection Costs

Fees Required to Assure Resumption of Services

Utility Deposit

DIVISION OF SENIOR SERVICES

Benefit Limits

Through the EHEAP program, qualifying households will receive a benefit per season of up to \$750 on a past due bill, to resolve their energy crisis. The benefit amount will depend on total household income. Households who

received LIHEAP crisis benefit during the same season will not be eligible for the benefit. Households on subsidized housing will be eligible for the benefit amount **minus** their utility allowance amount.

Event-Specific Services:

EHEAP

Emergency electric bill assistance for Senior Citizens- Contact Phone 561-355-4746

HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS

Benefit Limits:

- I. For clients applying for the *FPL Care to Share Program*, benefit limitations will stay the same for any COVID-19 related crisis:
 - a. Up to \$500 in assistance, (Care to Share may increase with approval by FPL)
- II. For *Rental Assistance*:
 - a. Ad Valorem:
 - i. Benefit cap per household is \$3,000
 - ii. Benefit cap for Security Deposit is up to \$2,000
 - b. EFSP:
 - i. Benefit cap is one month rent, up to \$1,000
 - c. SHIP:
 - i. Benefit limit is \$5,000 (Move-in costs)
 - ii. Benefit limit is \$15,000 (Rent and utilities for up to 12 months for tenants financially impacted by COVID-19) ¹

Event Specific Services:

CARE TO SHARE

Emergency Electric Bill Assistance

RENTAL

Rent/Lot fees for mobile homes

Rent & Security Deposit Assistance

Move-In Assistance

¹ This item is pending.

FINANCIALLY ASSISTED AGENCIES (FAA)

Benefit Limits

Benefit limits for all FAA will remain the same. These agencies are funded by Community Services Department to provide Economic Stability Programs.

Event Specific Services

Agency Name	Program Name	Service
Coalition for Independent Living Options	FIND	Financial assistance payments (i.e. rent payments; utility payments and/or utility deposits) for FIND clients.
Community Child Care Center of Delray Beach	Family Strengthening	Financial management services, coupled with crisis intervention services
El Sol	Worker Development Project	Educational and training opportunities; job matching services
CCMO/Families First	Kin Support	Provide financial assistance, counseling, legal services, healthcare, and case management that helps caregivers and kinship families to achieve healthy functioning and stability.
Farmworkers Coordinating Council	Family Preservation & Economic Stabilization	Case management; rent & utilities assistance; financial literacy; translation; food; clothing; household items; toiletries; diapers; transportation; referrals
The Glades Initiative	Connecting The Glades	Navigation; medicaid & food stamp assistance; financial literacy
Habilitation Center for the Handicapped	Employment Program for Adults with Disabilities	Case management; paid work training; job coaching
Palm Beach Habilitation Center	Achieving Economic Stability	Financial literacy
The Lord's Place	Cafe Joshua Job Training & Employment	Job search/readiness; job training programs
United Way	VITA	Free Tax Preparation