

SAN FRANCISCO EMA RYAN WHITE HIV 2024 STANDARDS OF CARE UPDATE PROJECT

EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES STANDARDS OF CARE

NOTE: The draft standards below describe only service elements specific to Ryan White-funded Emergency Financial Assistance services. Overarching standards common to all programs - such as standards related to client eligibility, insurance and benefits screening, facility standards, staff qualifications, evaluation, and use of Ryan White funds as the payor of last resort - will be included in a separate Common Standards document. This document will also be fully formatted in a future version.

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES STANDARDS

The purpose of the San Francisco Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA) Emergency Financial Assistance Standards of Care is to ensure consistency among the Ryan White-funded Emergency Financial Assistance services provided as part of the San Francisco EMA's continuum of care for persons living with HIV. The goal of Emergency Financial Assistance services is to prevent negative client outcomes for persons living with HIV resulting from emergency financial difficulties and to assist clients in securing a financially stable living situation.

DESCRIPTION OF EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Emergency Financial Assistance provides limited one-time or short-term payments to assist a Ryan White-eligible client with an emergent need to pay for essential items such as:

- Utilities;
- Emergency rent or lodging payments or essential move-in expenses;
- Client transportation
- Essential prescription eyewear;
- Unfunded dental procedures and equipment;
- Unfunded medical equipment;
- Cell phones and data plans; and
- Medications not funded through ADAP.

Additional items or services may also be allowable under this category based on urgent client need and on the unavailability of additional funds to support those needs. Approval for these services must be received from the contracting agency prior to disbursement of funds.

Emergency financial assistance can occur as a direct payment to an agency or through a voucher program. Emergency Financial Assistance payments are restricted to one-time or short-term payments to assist a Ryan White client with an emergent need for paying for essential services or equipment for a limited time.

UNITS OF SERVICE:

- **An Emergency Financial Assistance Services Unit of Service is defined as:**
- ✓ A single transaction on behalf of a client by an Emergency Financial Assistance provider.

EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES REQUIREMENTS:

To receive Emergency Financial Assistance services, clients must submit proof of need for a given payment, such as a utility shut-off notice or a note from a medical or dental provider affirming client need and the lack of any other existing funding to meet that need. **Emergency Financial Assistance funds can only be used as a last resort for payment of services and items over a short period of time, and never as ongoing or annual payments.** Examples of client emergencies include:

- Facing an imminent threat of losing basic utilities or housing;
- Requiring materials essential to preserving health and well-being such as transportation, eyewear, cellphones, walkers, or other equipment;
- Requiring support for emergency unfunded dental procedures; and
- Helping clients through a temporary, unplanned crisis in order to sustain a safe and healthy living environment.

When accessing Emergency Financial Assistance funds, clients must work with case managers or other service providers to develop a plan to avoid similar emergencies in the future. Changes should be made to the client's care plan to accommodate these plans, where relevant.

Providers must have systems in place to account for disbursed Emergency Financial Assistance funds. The systems must track the client's name, the staff person who distributed the funds, the date of the disbursement, confirmation of receipt of funds, and dollar amounts. These data elements can be tracked on the ARIES Services screen if no other tracking system is available. Emergency Financial Assistance providers must inform clinicians and other key providers when support has been provided, and must provide referrals to clients in need of emergency services not covered through this category such as food and home-delivered meals.

Emergency Financial Assistance providers are required to check in with clients who have received eviction prevention support approximately 90-120 days after receipt of funds to determine if the funds have been effective in preventing eviction.

Emergency Financial Assistance may **not** be used for:

- Ongoing or annual payments for any services or goods for clients;
- Direct cash payments to clients; and/or
- Activities that can be paid for under another Ryan White service category including ADAP or another payer source.