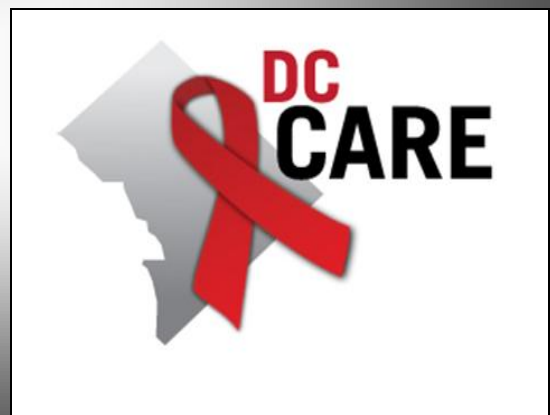


Emergency Financial Assistance Program Application Guide



Funded by DC Department Of Health HIV/AIDS Administration under Ryan White Part A

Ryan White Part A Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) Program Application Guide

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Introduction

This guide describes the application procedures and policies for the Ryan White Part A Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) programs. The purpose of EFA is to provide emergency financial assistance to low income people with HIV in the District of Columbia who have no other source of payment. Assistance is available in the following areas: housing and utilities, telephone assistance, food vouchers, and medical transportation. Emergency is defined as unmet financial need that could result in eviction for non-payment of rent; discontinuance of basic telephone service or utilities; lack of transportation to HIV core medical or supportive services appointments; or lack of sufficient food or hygiene products. Determination of eligibility for EFA requires a comprehensive assessment of the client's individual situation. Therefore, clients wishing to access EFA must do so through their regular case managers. Clients who do not have a case manager can identify case management resources by visiting <http://haadirectory.doh.dc.gov/default.aspx> , or by calling 202-671-4900.

All Agencies wishing to refer clients to emergency assistance programs must sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with DC CARE which outlines policies, procedures, as well as roles and responsibilities for providing assistance to clients. Once the MOA is signed, the referring agency designates staff who will submit EFA applications to attend an orientation session at DC CARE. These staff can be responsible for training any additional staff that are identified in the future. However, the agency may also elect to attend future staff to DC CARE for orientation. Orientation sessions last for approximately 45 minutes.

Completing the Application

Eligibility and Documentation

This section lists the eligibility requirements for each type of assistance along with the documentation that is required to be submitted with the application. The EFA application can be downloaded from <http://www.dccare.org/emergency-assistance.php#efa>

All Assistance

In order to qualify for any EFA an individual must be:

- Diagnosed with HIV. Diagnosis must be documented by a healthcare provider statement (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant), confirmatory HIV Test, i.e.: Western Blot, or detectable viral load AND CD4 count. The provider statement, confirmatory HIV test, or detectable viral load provides confirmation of HIV status. The CD4 count is used as a marker for disease progression and is particularly useful for prioritizing services to clients with more advanced stages of illness. The CD4 count should be dated within 12 months prior to the application date.

- A resident of the District of Columbia. Residency can be documented by Driver's License or non-Driver's ID issued by the DC Department of Motor Vehicles. If neither of these is available, other official photo ID, i.e.: passport, permanent resident card, employment ID, **AND** one of the following documents must be provided: current lease, utility or telephone bill, notarized letter from Landlord, or voter registration card. If no picture ID available, provide two of the above documents. Homeless clients can provide a certification from a DC homeless shelter on official letterhead or case manager certification).
- Have income at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level. See Appendix A for federal Poverty guidelines. These guidelines change each calendar year and are typically published in the Federal Register in January.
- Income must be documented by one of the following: Two pay stubs, SSI or SSDI award letter, TANF award letter, Interim Disability Assistance letter, or Case Manager Income Affidavit. Pay stubs should be from consecutive pay periods within 60 days prior to the application date. If a client's income was impacted by a recent hospitalization, a physician statement or hospital discharge document should be included with the application. If a client is not employed and not receiving unemployment benefits, the case manager can submit a written statement to that effect, signed by the case manager and the client.

All applicants must also provide the following.

1. Number of other household occupants, photo identification of client and/or bill with current address. The EFA application includes a table on page 3 to provide names of all household occupants and their relationship to the applicant. Each application must document the household size, list the names of all household occupants, and must identify the relationship of each occupant to the applicant. The applicant must provide birth certificates for all dependent children listed on the application. TANF Award letter, Medicaid card, guardianship or birth certificate can also be for this verification.
2. Estimated monthly expenditures for the client. These are also provided in a table on page 3

Special circumstances:

1. **Applicant is employed at the agency where he or she receives case management services**

If an applicant is employed at the agency where he or she receives case management services, special arrangement must be made to have a senior manager to approve the application before it is submitted to DC CARE. The purpose of this policy is to prevent the conflict of interest that may occur when peers submit applications on each other's behalf.

2. **Applicant rents a room in a house or lives in a rooming house**

Applicants who reside in a rooming house or room in a private residence must also provide a lease or written agreement that document their tenancy and follow all other relevant guidelines for applicants living in independent dwellings.

Emergency Rent and Utility Assistance

1. Clients receiving subsidized rent through HOPWA, Housing Choice Vouchers, Shelter Plus Care or any other Federal housing assistance program are not eligible for emergency rental assistance or emergency utilities assistance.
2. Emergency in this program is defined as imminent or current termination of a utility or imminent eviction.
 - a. For utilities assistance, imminent means that a client has already received a notice of termination of service.
 - b. For rental assistance, imminent means that a client has already received a Summons from Landlord Tenant Court or a Writ of Eviction from Landlord Tenant Court.
 - c. In order to comply with IRS income reporting requirements, DC CARE must report payments to landlords to the IRS and issue 1099 forms to landlords who have received payments each year. To facilitate this reporting requirement, applications must include an IRS W-9 form and documentation of social security number or Tax ID number.
3. If the outstanding bill that is larger than the amount of Rental or Utility Assistance cap, the client must first identify and pay the balance of the rent using other sources to pay the amount above the EFA cap. Payment must be made directly to the creditor and receipt of payment must be submitted for the EFA request to be approved. Notification on official letterhead from other service organizations indicating their intent to make payment within specified timeframes may also be submitted. These provisions are required to prevent contribution of EFA resources to situations that do not prevent eviction or service termination.
4. If responsibility for rental payments is divided among more than one tenant, this should be clearly explained on the application.
5. For first month's rent, the application should include a letter from the property Management Company or Landlord indicating that the client has been accepted for tenancy, proposed move-in date, and the monthly rental amount. Letters from private landlords must be notarized.

Federal regulations prohibit use of Ryan White funds for security deposits. Funding for security deposits may be available from the Bridge Fund. Information about the Bridge Fund is available at www.housingetc.org/gatekeep.htm.

Benefit Caps: Rental and Utilities

Type of Assistance	Annual Cap
Emergency Rental Assistance	\$1300
Emergency Utility Assistance	\$ 500
First month rent	\$1300
Moving Assistance	\$600

Moving Assistance

1. Eligibility requirements for moving assistance is the same as rental and utilities assistance as indicated above.
2. Completed application for moving assistance must be received at least 3 business days before the proposed moving date. The application must include an inventory of the articles to be moved, i.e.: estimated number of boxes and major pieces of furniture. The application must provide the current address, the new address where the client is moving, the date of the requested move, and current telephone number. Logistical details, such as location of an apartment on an upper floor, presence or absence of an elevator, and unusually long distances between loading zone and front door dock should also be included. It is the client's responsibility to find out the policies and or restricted schedules for moving from the old residence and for moving into the new residence.

Emergency Telephone Assistance

1. Emergency telephone assistance can be provided when termination of telephone service is imminent. For telephone assistance, imminent means that a client has already received a notice of termination of service.
2. If the outstanding bill is larger than the amount of telephone assistance cap, the client must first identify other sources to pay the remaining amount above the cap. Payment must first be made to the creditor and receipt of payment must be provided at the time of EFA application submission for the request to be processed. Notification on official letterhead from other service organizations indicating their intent to make payment within the required timeframe may also be submitted. These provisions are required to prevent contribution of EFA resources to situations that do not prevent eviction or service termination
3. Assistance will only be provided for cellular phone service when a cellular phone is the only phone service available to the client.
4. Itemized bills for all outstanding months must be provided with the application. Therefore, a current bill with a past due amount, will not provide adequate detail. The entire past due amount on the most recent bill must be accounted for by providing itemized bills for all past due months.
5. Clients who do not currently have phone service can apply through their case manager to have new service established. In this case, the client must provide documentation of the cost to establish service from the phone company, or the case manager can contact the phone company to establish service and placing the total cost to establish service on the application.
6. EFA funds can only pay for basic monthly phone service and taxes. EFA funds will not pay for any long distance calls; operator assisted calls, collect calls, directory assistance calls, calling card calls, unless it is part of a basic package. In addition, purchase of any phone equipment, cable television or DSL or other internet access are not allowable with EFA funds.

Benefit Caps: Telephone Assistance

Annual cap for telephone assistance is \$150

Food Vouchers

1. The application for Food Vouchers must include verification of any currently received federal or state subsidized food stamp programs. If a client receives food stamps, the application must include proof of the amount of food stamps the client receives monthly at the time of the application. A clear explanation must be provided explaining why the client needs food voucher assistance in addition to food stamps.
2. Any client receiving food stamps who needs additional food should be referred first to a food bank. Referral to food bank shall be documented on the referral certification form, available at www.dccare.org/referralcert.php#erava.
3. If the client was not able to obtain food bank assistance, this should be explained as well.
4. If the client is an HIV positive child (under 18 years of age), the application must clearly identify that the applicant is a minor. The primary applicant can only be a minor in situations where his custodial parent or guardian is not HIV positive. If the parent or guardian is also HIV positive, she or he should be the primary applicant. No members of household can be attached to any application in which the applicant is a minor.
5. If the applicant is an adult with children, assistance can be provided for the entire family, irrespective of other family members' HIV status.
6. All clients applying for food vouchers must also be referred for nutritional counseling.
7. Although information is requested on the household size, no income is assessed for domestic partners or shared head of household and this person will not be included in the household size for assessment of food voucher amounts.

Benefit Caps: Food Vouchers

Type of Assistance	Annual Cap*	Cap per Application**
Family	\$700	\$350
Individual	\$300	\$150

***Annual family cap is computed at \$300 for HIV positive applicant plus \$100 per additional dependent, up to a maximum of four dependents.**

****Per application family cap is computed at \$150 for HIV positive applicant plus \$50 per additional dependent, up to a maximum of four dependents.**

Medical Transportation Services

1. The following types of transportation are available to eligible HIV positive persons in the District of Columbia:
 - Metro Bus Tokens
 - Metro Fare cards
 - Taxis
 - Van Transportation
2. Transportation services can be used for medical appointments, as well as HIV related support services.
3. Clients who have Medicaid are not eligible for assisted transportation, i.e.: van transportation or taxi.
4. For assisted transportation, a client must provide notification of an appointment requiring transportation services at least 48 hours in advance.
5. Assisted transportation should only be provided to a client who meets one of the following criteria:
 - Client is disabled or is easily fatigued and would experience difficulty using public transportation.
 - Client will need to travel with young children to and from appointments.
If a client meets any of the above criteria, taxi transportation should be accessed whenever possible, since taxi service is significantly less expensive than van transportation.
6. Case managers wishing to access transportation services for their clients must submit a transportation request form via fax to our secure fax line only (202-223-9382). The form is available at <http://www.dccare.org/application-process.php#transportation>
7. If the application is approved, transportation vouchers can be picked up at DC CARE on Tuesdays or Thursdays. In cases of urgency, other pick up times can be arranged by contacting the Program Manager at DC CARE.
8. Case managers should maintain a log to document utilization of transportation services. Each time a new request is made, the prior log must be submitted to account for distribution of previously allocated vouchers (tokens, fare cards, etc.). The log is available at <http://www.dccare.org/application-process.php#transportationlog>

Benefit Caps: Medical Transportation

- There are no annual caps for transportation services.

Submission and Disposition

All Assistance

1. Applications are to be submitted to DC CARE with supporting documents indicated on the application via fax to our **secure fax line only (202-223-9382)**. The EFA application can be downloaded from <http://www.dccare.org/emergency-assistance.php#efa>
2. Case managers wishing to access transportation services for their clients must submit a transportation request form via fax to our **secure fax line only (202-223-9382)**. The form is available at <http://www.dccare.org/application-process.php#transportation>
3. The Program Manager at DC CARE will review applications and provide a disposition to the referring case manager via email within two business days via email.
4. If additional documentation is requested, it should be submitted within five business days. If the requested information is not received within ten business days, the request may be closed and all related documentation may be shredded, unless the submitting case manager requests special arrangements due to some extenuating circumstance.
5. Payments will be made directly to vendors, i.e.: utility company or landlord within five business days of application approval. If a check cannot be issued within five days of application approval, the Program Manager will contact the vendor to payee to confirm pending payment to prevent disconnection or eviction.
6. Any client that knowingly submits inaccurate or falsified information to obtain benefits may be suspended from applying for EFA services for a period of up to one year or indefinitely, depending on the severity of the infraction. If a case manager knowingly participates in such falsification, he or she may be suspended from submitting EFA applications for a period of up to one year, or indefinitely as well.

Food Vouchers and Transportation Vouchers

1. If the application is approved, food vouchers can be picked up at DC CARE on Tuesdays or Thursdays. In cases of urgency, other pick up times can be arranged by contacting the Program Manager at DC CARE.
2. Food vouchers can be accessed by eligible individuals and families twice in a 12 month period. Applicants must wait at least 6 months before submitting a second application in any 12 month period.

Transportation

1. Upon approval, tokens, fare cards, SmarTrip cards, or other transportation vouchers can be picked up at DC CARE on Tuesdays or Thursdays. In cases of urgency, other pick up times can be arranged by contacting the Program Manager at DC CARE.

2. Case managers should maintain a log to document utilization of transportation services. Each time a new request is made, the prior log must be submitted to account for distribution of previously allocated vouchers, tokens, fare cards, etc. The log is available at <http://www.dccare.org/application-process.php#transportationlog>
3. Transportation services can only be used for medical services and HIV related support services. Transportation services cannot be used for job interviews or any type of personal transportation needs.

2011 HHS Poverty Guidelines

Persons in Family	Poverty Guideline 48 Contiguous States and DC	300% of Poverty
1	\$10,890	\$32,670
2	\$14,710	\$44,130
3	\$18,530	\$55,590
4	\$22,350	\$67,050
5	\$26,170	\$78,510
6	\$29,990	\$89,970
7	\$33,810	\$101,430
8	\$37,630	\$112,890
For each additional person, add	\$3,820	\$11,460

Source: Federal Register, Vol. 76 No. 13. January 20, 2011