



Administration of the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) Funding Authorized Under the FY2019 Border Supplemental

Elizabeth M. Webster

Analyst in Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery

Updated August 20, 2019

This Insight provides a brief overview of the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP), and funding provided for it through the FY2019 Border Supplemental.

General EFSP Administration

The EFSP provides grants to private nonprofit organizations and local governments to supplement and expand ongoing efforts and local programs to provide shelter, food, and supportive services for [individuals and families who are homeless or experiencing economic emergencies](#). It was first authorized under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-77), later renamed the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The EFSP is codified in [42 U.S.C. §11331 et seq.](#) EFSP funds may be used to provide the following:

- food (i.e., served meals or groceries);
- lodging (i.e., mass shelter or hotel);
- one month's rent or mortgage payment;
- one month's utility bill; and
- equipment necessary to feed or shelter people (up to \$300 per item).

Although the EFSP is [administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](#), it is not linked to [major disasters or emergencies](#). It is governed by a [National Board](#) that is [chaired by a Director](#) (by statute, the FEMA Administrator). The National Board also includes representatives from private

Congressional Research Service

7-....

www.crs.gov

IN11156

nonprofit organizations. When Congress appropriates funding to the EFSP, the Director is responsible for [awarding a grant](#) to the National Board, and the National Board is responsible for establishing [program guidelines](#) and [disbursing the funding](#). Localities (i.e., [cities or counties](#)) are generally designated for funding based on a [formula](#) that includes population, poverty, and unemployment data. Each locality designated for funding must establish a [Local Board](#), which is responsible for [advertising funding availability](#) and determining how their allotment of [local funding will be distributed](#), including selecting the grant recipients (i.e., [private nonprofit organizations or public organizations of the local government in the individual locality](#)). The National Board disburses funds directly to local recipient organizations (LROs) selected by the Local Boards. Additionally, localities that do not qualify under the formula may receive funds through the [State Set-Aside process](#), and this process can also be used to allow localities that are designated for funding to receive additional funding.

EFSP Supplemental Funding

The Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Humanitarian Assistance and Security at the Southern Border Act, 2019 (hereinafter “supplemental,” P.L. 116-26) was enacted on July 1, 2019. In the supplemental, [FEMA received \\$30 million for the EFSP](#) “for the purposes of providing assistance to aliens released from the custody of the Department of Homeland Security [DHS].”

With regard to eligibility, the [supplemental](#) states that the EFSP funding

- must only be distributed to “jurisdictions or local recipient organizations serving communities that have experienced a significant influx of such aliens” (i.e., aliens released from DHS custody); and
- “may be used to reimburse such jurisdictions or local recipient organizations for costs incurred in providing services to such aliens on or after January 1, 2019.”

Program Status

FEMA issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) ([DHS-19-DAD-024-00-02](#)) for the \$30 million in EFSP supplemental funding on July 30, 2019, with a closing date of August 5, 2019. The National Board was the only eligible applicant.

FEMA announced its award of \$30 million in EFSP supplemental funding to the National Board on August 16, 2019. The [supplemental](#) requires the National Board to disburse the funding not later than 30 days from the date the funding is awarded. The [NOFO](#), however, directs the National Board to issue reimbursement guidance within 30 days of FEMA awarding the grant funds. The EFSP website was updated a few days after the award announcement to provide information on the supplemental funding, including an [FAQ](#) that provides additional information on eligible reimbursements.

The [FAQ](#) states that the National Board will notify the Local Boards and State Set-Aside Committees when the application is made available on the EFSP website. Applicants will then have 10 business days to submit an application. There are two [application tracks](#): (1) eligible local nonprofit, faith-based, or governmental entities can apply through their Local Board; and (2) statewide organizations that provided direct services (but not through a local nonprofit, faith-based, or governmental entity) may apply through their State Set-Aside Committee, which functions as a Local Board but for statewide interests. After the close of the application period, Local Boards and State Set-Aside Committees will have 10 days to review the applications to ensure applicant eligibility and application completeness, and will then submit all of the applications for their area as a package to the National Board for review and final award determinations.

Program Parameters

Per the [NOFO](#), the funding has been separated into a \$25 million and a \$5 million allocation, and the National Board will prioritize funding to the most impacted areas. FEMA identified the four border states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California as having experienced a significant influx of aliens when it divided the grant funding into two allocations. These four border states are eligible for funding from the \$25 million allocation. The remaining \$5 million may be allocated to any of the 50 states (including the four border states).

The [NOFO](#) states that the National Board will use its existing structure for funding distribution and program administration. Funding will be awarded *competitively*, and the application will be posted to the EFSP website (the [deadline](#) is forthcoming). Per the [FAQ](#), the National Board will consider several factors when making award determinations, including

- migrant release data received from Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE)/Customs and Border Protection (CBP);
- proximity to ICE/CBP facilities performing releases;
- number of migrants served; and
- applicant information on direct costs incurred in serving migrants.

Reimbursements will reportedly [prioritize direct shelter, food, and related expenses](#), and then secondary expenditures (e.g., other services, such as medical services) may be considered for reimbursement. The National Board will be responsible for final award decisions.

Potential applicants may visit the [EFSP Supplemental Funding Information Details](#) website for more information regarding supplemental funding eligibility and the application process and requirements, as well as webinar training resources that support program participation and administration. Potential applicants may also contact their [Local Board](#) for additional information.

EveryCRSReport.com

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) is a federal legislative branch agency, housed inside the Library of Congress, charged with providing the United States Congress non-partisan advice on issues that may come before Congress.

EveryCRSReport.com republishes CRS reports that are available to all Congressional staff. The reports are not classified, and Members of Congress routinely make individual reports available to the public.

Prior to our republication, we redacted phone numbers and email addresses of analysts who produced the reports. We also added this page to the report. We have not intentionally made any other changes to any report published on EveryCRSReport.com.

CRS reports, as a work of the United States government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.

Information in a CRS report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to members of Congress in connection with CRS' institutional role.

EveryCRSReport.com is not a government website and is not affiliated with CRS. We do not claim copyright on any CRS report we have republished.