

Using the Pandemic Emergency Assistance Fund: Winter Utility Needs and More

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Pandemic Emergency Assistance Fund

- The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 created a new section 403(c) of the Social Security Act
- \$1 billion Fund to assist needy families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Eligible Entities:
 - States including the District of Columbia
 - Tribes operating a tribal TANF program
 - All 5 US territories: Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and Northern Mariana Islands



Allotments to States, Territories, and Tribes

- Funds were allotted following the formula in the law. After deducting \$2 million for federal administration, of the remainder:
- 92.5 percent of funds (\$923,150,000) were distributed to states and the District of Columbia based on a two-part formula:
 - one half based on child population
 - one half based on prior state expenditures on non-recurrent, short term benefits, basic assistance, and emergency assistance
- 7.5 percent of funds (\$74,850,000) were distributed to tribal TANF programs and all five US territories, distributed in a manner deemed appropriate by HHS
 - Allotments are based on a tribe's or territory's existing share of the total TANF funds distributed to tribes and the territories



Timeline for Requesting and Expending Funds

Expenditure Commitment Requirement

- States had to request funds by April 25, 2021 (45 days from enactment)
- Tribes and territories had to request funds by June 9, 2021 (90 days from enactment)

Timeline for Expending Funds

- Grantees must expend initial allotments between by September 30, 2022
- HHS will reallocate any unused funds, to be expended within 12 months of receipt



Use of Funds

- Grantees may use funds only for certain non-recurrent, short term (NRST) benefits
- NRST benefits must meet the regulatory definition and be limited to those that fall into the specific expenditure reporting category mentioned in the legislation
 - designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need
 - must not be intended to meet on-going needs
 - must not extend beyond four months
 - must only include expenditures such as emergency assistance and diversion payments, emergency housing and short-term homelessness assistance, emergency food aid, short-term utilities payments, burial assistance, clothing allowances, and back-to-school payments
 - may not include tax credits, child care, transportation, or short-term education and training

Use of Funds

- Grantees may use funds for administrative costs (15% cap for states and territories)
- Grantees must use funds to *supplement*, and not supplant, other federal, state, tribal, territorial, or local funds

Reporting

- New form ACF-196P
- Due annually – next due December 29, 2022
- Emailed to Pandemic Emergency Fund mailbox (PEAF@acf.hhs.gov)



Reallotment

- OFA will reallot unused funds:
 - any funding not allotted in the original awards and
 - any funds received by a state, tribe, or territory that are unobligated or unliquidated at the end of fiscal year 2022
- All grantees are eligible for reallotted funds, unless they have unexpended funds at the end of the expenditure period, by September 30, 2022

Winter Utility Costs

- ACF published a brief on February 1, 2022 – Responding to Winter Utility Needs: Using the Pandemic Emergency Assistance Fund
- Brief can be found at:
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/data/pandemic-emergency-assistance-fund>

Help with Winter Energy Costs

The Pandemic Emergency Assistance Fund (PEAF) can support needy families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and by unusually high heating costs this winter. Read more about how grantees can strategically use remaining PEAF allocations along with other federal funds to help families with energy costs in this February 2022 issue brief.

[Read the Brief on Responding to Winter Utility Needs with PEAF](#) (PDF — 228.47 KB)



Winter Utility Costs

- Families struggling due to hardships caused by COVID-19 are at greater risk for energy insecurity
- One-time payments or direct help with utility payments can provide immediate economic relief to families
- Grantees may provide new payments with remaining PEAFF dollars to address the recent rise in energy costs this winter – addressing a different specific need for eligible families
- Families may also get help from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA)

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Q&A Session



THANK YOU!!

