



Council Question and Answer

Related To

Item #111

Meeting Date

March 25, 2021

Additional Answer Information

ARA spending framework

QUESTION/ANSWER: Council Member Fuentes's Office

1) Can funding for mental health and wellness services, such as that to be allocated to essential workers affected by COVID-19, similarly be allocated toward general public community assistance programs, child care assistance programs, or more generally through the public health response and recovery to support mental health initiatives?

As with previous funding received related to the COVID pandemic, the legislation and Treasury guidance states that the funds may only be used to respond to the pandemic. Thus, the money can be used to provide mental health services to any person affected by COVID or to any group assisting persons affected by COVID.

2) Can a portion of the City's allocation of the \$510 million appropriated to FEMA for local emergency food and shelter grants be directed toward providing flood insurance relief to Austin communities? If so, in what form(s) could the relief be granted?

FEMA received \$510 million in supplemental funding for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) from ARPA ([link](#)) to assist organizations in communities across the country dedicated to providing food, shelter and supportive services to people with economic emergencies, including our nation's hungry and homeless populations. EFSP is a federally funded program administered by FEMA to supplement and expand work of local social service organizations – both nonprofit and governmental – to provide shelter, food and supportive services to individuals, families and households who have economic, non-disaster related emergencies ([link](#)). EFSP funds are provided to local jurisdictions based on a national allocation formula. Eligible program services that EFSP can cover include:

- Food in the form of served meals or groceries;
- Lodging in a mass shelter or non-congregate shelter facility limited to 30-days of assistance;
- One month rent or mortgage and/or utility assistance to prevent eviction or foreclosure;
- Transportation costs associated with food or shelter;
- Minor emergency repair of small equipment essential to mass feeding or sheltering;
- Expenses incurred making mass feeding or sheltering facilities accessible for individuals with disabilities; and
- Supplies and small equipment essential to feed to shelter people

Flood insurance relief for the community does not appear an eligible program services under EFSP.

Representatives from the local EFSP board may be able to provide more specific guidance. Their contact information is attached.