

Maine State Long-Term Recovery Group Disaster Relief Fund Allocation Guide

General Information

The Maine Disaster Relief Fund (hereinafter, “the Fund”) is managed and operated by the Maine State Long-Term Recovery Board (SLTRB) and accepts cash donations solely for the purpose of assisting eligible nonprofit and local government organizations active in disaster recovery to serve affected individuals and households (hereinafter, “clients”). No money donated to the Fund is used for overhead.

The Fund is intended to be used to help fill the unmet disaster-caused needs of clients after all other personal, local, state, and federal resources have been exhausted. In all cases, whether or not the disaster was federally declared, the FEMA Sequence of Delivery described herein is used as a guiding principal. In all cases, an accepted disaster case management process must be followed for grants from the Fund to be allocated.

Distribution of grants from the Fund to the eligible entities listed herein is intended to give local communities a degree of flexibility in determining need and criteria for distribution. However, eligible entities may not give cash directly to beneficiaries; they may only use the cash to purchase goods and services on behalf of the clients they are serving.

Entities must follow the Case Presentation Guidelines and Case Management Form attached to this document to be considered for disbursement. Requests will be evaluated by the Allocations Committee of the SLTRB according to the Fund’s eligibility criteria priorities listed herein, the urgency and gravity of the need, the verification that goods or services are not being duplicated, and will be subject to the availability of money in the Fund.

Individuals and households affected by a disaster should contact 2-1-1 Maine to find out if the Maine Disaster Relief Fund has been activated for a particular event. (See “Determination of Fund Activation” for more information.) If active, 2-1-1 may refer callers to contact one of the eligible entities listed herein serving their community. If there are no eligible entities available, the SLTRB will assist the client in finding a disaster case manager.

Eligible Entities

The following entities active in the disaster response (hereinafter 'entity') are eligible to receive disbursements from the Fund to assist clients:

- **Disaster Case Managers**
Disaster Case Managers (DCM) must be appropriately trained by a recognized entity that offers disaster case management training. United Methodist Committee on Relief, Catholic Charities, Lutheran Disaster Response, and The Salvation Army are examples of some entities that train DCMs.
- **Charitable organizations (including Community Action Program agencies, faith-based organizations, and 501(c)(3) organizations)**
Charitable organizations that are not members of Maine Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (ME VOAD) or a recognized Community Organizations Active in Disasters must demonstrate at least one of the following:
 - 501(c)(3) status; or
 - A certificate of existence from the Maine Secretary of State's Office (Title 13B Maine Nonprofit Corporation Act); or
 - If a faith-based organization, membership with the Maine Council of Churches.
- **Long-Term Recovery/Unmet Needs Committees**
Long-Term Recovery/Unmet Needs Committees must be recognized by the STLRB prior to becoming eligible to receive cash disbursements.
- **Municipal or county general assistance programs**
Municipal/county general assistance programs must include an organization that uses CAN to be eligible.

Client Eligibility Criteria

There are two fundamental criteria for eligibility:

- The client has an immediate disaster-related need that cannot be met by assistance from other sources, including insurance, personal assets, donated resources, or government programs; or
- The client has disaster-related losses that are not covered by insurance; local, state, or federal grants; or cannot otherwise covered by personal assets or donated resources.

Fund Priorities

Most cases will be prioritized by the following categories:

- Category 1 – The client is permanently displaced
Examples include
 - The client’s primary residence is destroyed and cannot be repaired
 - The destroyed residence is the only residence owned or rented by the client
- Category 2 – The client is temporarily displaced
Examples include
 - The client’s primary residence sustained major damage but can be repaired
 - The affected residence’s primary heating system, well, or septic system is not functional
 - The client’s only vehicle is destroyed
 - The only access to the client’s primary residence is on a private road that was destroyed
- Category 3 – The client requires other residential repairs or replacements
Examples include
 - The client’s primary residence sustained minor damage or is affected but is still habitable
 - Appliances, devices, and furniture items essential for daily living were lost or destroyed
- Category 4 – All other issues
Examples include
 - Essential bedding, window coverings, and other household items necessary to maintain a basic quality of living were lost or destroyed
 - Essential clothing for household members was lost or destroyed
 - The affected residence’s primary heating fuel (e.g., heating oil, wood, pellets) was lost or destroyed
 - Any case determined by a majority of the SLTRB to be worthy of consideration

Losses or damages that have been determined to have existed prior to the disaster, were deferred maintenance, or are part of an ongoing social issue are not eligible for a grant from the Fund. It is important to distinguish and clearly articulate the disaster’s specific impact on the client, especially if they have housing, medical, immigration, or other pre-disaster issues. The goal of the SLTRB or the Fund is to address unmet disaster-caused needs for clients.

The Fund is not intended to upgrade a client’s previous living conditions, although this may happen in reconstruction in order to conform to local building codes to provide safe, sanitary, secure, and appropriate housing.

It is the responsibility of the eligible entity to verify its clients’ unmet needs. Needs not met by other sources are collaboratively identified by the client and the eligible entity, and the client is empowered to develop a recovery plan. Each entity must have full authorized access to and agree to utilize the Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN) to manage cases.

Program Criteria

To receive grant money the entity must adhere to the following program design and criteria, and distribute the grant money based upon those criteria.

The entity must identify a point of contact, usually a disaster case manager, to administer allocations from the Fund.

The entity must determine the requirements to verify need and the schedule of benefits for the needs presented. The process used must be applied consistently within the community the entity is serving. The entity may be requested to provide documentation of its process.

The entity is responsible for tracking how the grant money is used and for keeping records of all recipients for three years after the last beneficiary's file has been formally closed. This includes keeping receipts, contracts, or other official transaction records, as well as records for each household served, and reporting to the SLTRB upon request a breakdown of how the grant money was used, including the following information:

- Households that received assistance (using standardized case management numbering)
- Specific amount of benefit per household

The entity is responsible for ensuring that all of the grant money received is used for unmet needs described in the "Eligibility Criteria". The Fund does not provide any administrative overhead in assisting with distribution of relief grant money.

Neither citizenship nor local residency is required of clients to receive assistance from entities using money from the Fund.

Distribution Criteria

Using the guidelines provided, each entity must determine the appropriate method to distribute its allocation from the Fund. No entity may give cash directly to the clients it serves; the cash may only be used to purchase goods and services on behalf of those clients.

The United Way of Kennebec Valley, the fiscal agent for the Fund, will transfer the cash to the entity, whose point of contact will administer it by the most appropriate method.

Entities receiving cash from the Fund must ensure that all people with functional and access needs have been served in the same manner as other applicants.

As long as money in the Fund continues to be available, entities that are still serving clients with unmet needs are eligible to request disbursements.

Clients that receive goods and services should be notified those goods and services are "qualified disaster relief" as defined under Section 139 of the Federal IRS Code and, therefore, are not taxable.

Clients that receive goods and services and are later compensated for those goods and services through insurance or other sources are encouraged to give that money back to the Fund, so that it may be used for other clients' unmet needs.

Maine Disaster Relief Fund Case Management Form

Entity's Information

Name: _____

Check one: Disaster case manager Long-Term Recovery/Unmet Needs Committee
 Charitable organization Municipal/county general assistance program

Point of Contact: _____

Physical Address: _____

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Website (if applicable): _____

Entity has full authorized access to Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN): Yes No

Case Information

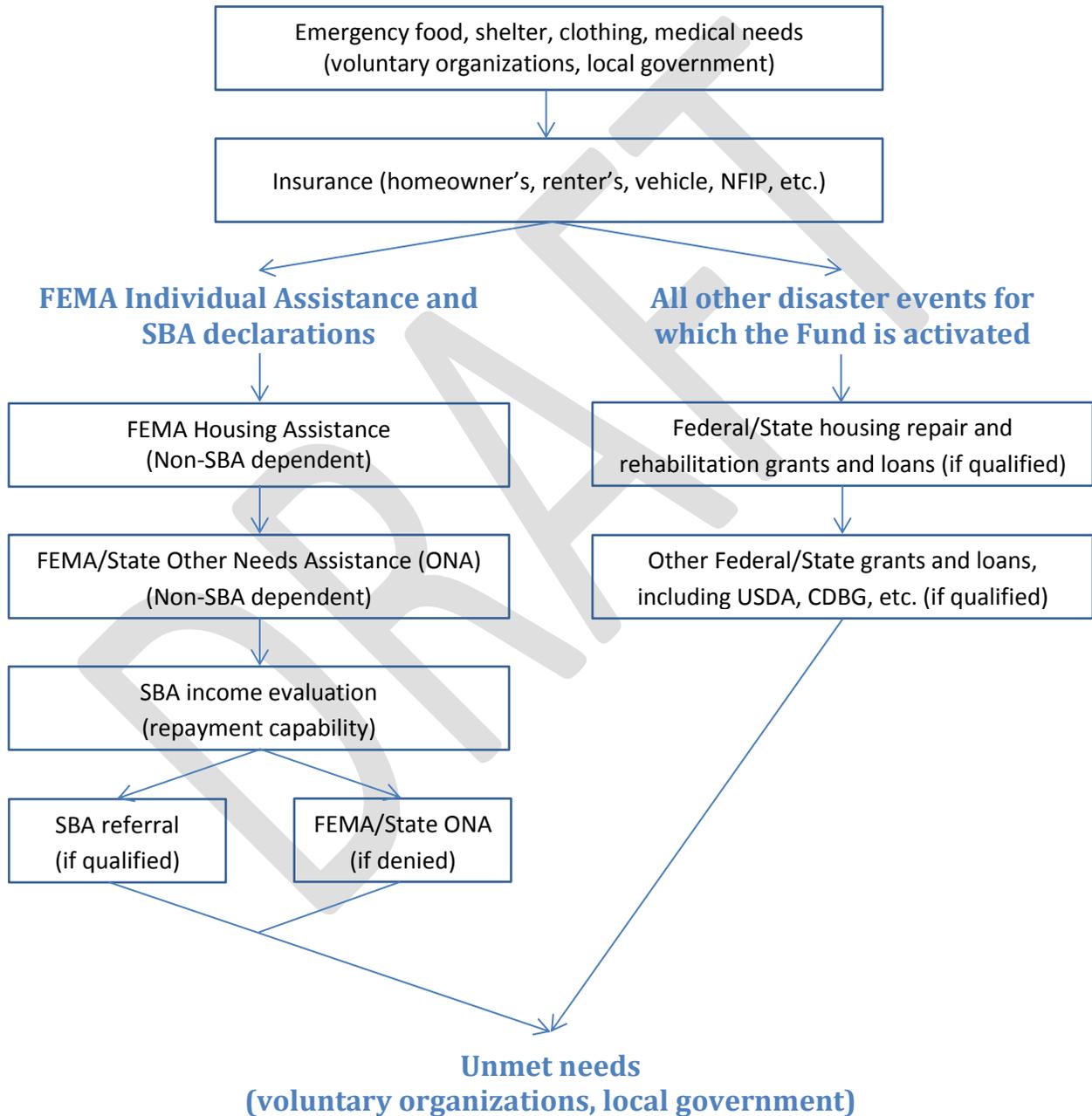
CAN case number: _____

In a separate file, provide the following information:

- Brief summary of the client's pre-disaster situation.
- Brief summary of how the client was impacted or affected by the disaster.
- Documents describing the assistance the client has already received. (Refer to the Sequence of Delivery guide that follows. Include insurance payouts, FEMA assistance, SBA and other loans, documentation of donated goods or services). Briefly explain the amount or value of the assistance received and how it was used.
- Brief summary of the unmet need[s]. Include alternate sources sought to meet remaining needs. Demonstrate client's case is registered in CAN and explain how benefits will not be duplicated.
- Brief explanation of amount being requested. Include written estimates from vendors, catalog prices of goods, etc. Describe how the grant will be disbursed.

Sequence of Delivery

Whether or not the disaster receives a Federal declaration for Individual Assistance, the SLTRB and the Fund follow the FEMA Sequence of Delivery as guiding principal for allocating grant money to eligible entities. The Sequence of Delivery ensures that clients have used all available resources and that the Fund is used for genuinely unmet needs.



Case Presentation Process

When the Maine SLTRB has determined the Fund can be activated to support recovery from a particular disaster, the following guidelines shall be followed by entities requesting grants from the Fund.

1. Client with unmet needs

A client with unmet needs is connected with one of the four eligible entities—a disaster case manager, a charitable organization, a long-term/unmet needs committee, or a General Assistance office.

2. Eligible entity prepares request

The entity representing the client verifies the client's unmet needs and completes the Case Management Form, including the documentation requested in the form.

3. Eligible entity contacts the SLTRB Allocations Director

When the entity has all the required documentation, it contacts the Allocations Director of the SLTRB to review the request for a grant.

4. SLTRB Allocations Director coordinates Allocations Committee

The Allocations Director coordinates a hearing date with the Allocations Committee members.

5. Eligible entity presents request

The entity representing the client presents the request for a grant to the committee, either on conference call or in person. It provides the committee with the supporting documentation for review.

6. SLTRB Allocations Committee makes recommendation

The Allocations Committee reviews the case and either approves as-is, sends back for revision, or rejects the request. If the request is sent back for revision, the entity may re-submit the request for review. If the request is rejected, the Allocations Committee will provide its reason in writing.

7. SLTRB Allocations Committee directs the Fund to disburse grant

When a request is approved, the Allocations Director requests the fiduciary agent for the Fund to disburse a grant to the entity representing the client.

8. Eligible entity submits documents and closes case

When an eligible entity has utilized the grant on behalf of a client, it will submit the required documents to the STLRB and close the case in CAN.