

Committees to abide by the stated rules of this Plan and to focus on the following concerns and principles mandated by the National Board:

- Serve individuals in need without discrimination and avoid duplication of benefits by supplementing food and shelter services individuals might currently be receiving, as well as by aiding those who are receiving no assistance.

- Refuse to authorize the spending of funds on costs that differ from those allowed by the National Board, unless a written request is made in advance and approved by the National Board.

- Restrict shelter repairs to minimum work required to bring the facility into compliance with local building codes and for emergency repairs only to keep the facility open during the program year (\$5,000 limit). Avoid decorative or non-essential repairs and purchases as this is outside the intent of this program. The benefit of rehabilitation to provide service should be carefully weighed against the response to needs that exist at the time. Emphasis should be placed on currently existing needs.

The National Board is mandated, as are Local Boards, LROs, SSA Committees, and FEMA, to carry out the intent of the law. We must all ensure that as decisions are made, we not only question if a specific expenditure falls within the guidelines for eligible costs, but also if making this expenditure would fulfill the intent of the program and the law.

This funding should be used to target special emergency needs. And when we discuss emergency needs we are referring to economic, not disaster-related, emergencies. The funding should supplement feeding and sheltering efforts in ways that make a difference. What that means is:

- EFSP is not intended to make up for budget shortfalls or to be considered just a line in an annual budget;
- it is not intended that the funds must go to the same agencies for the exact same purposes every year; and,
- the funding is open to all organizations helping hungry and homeless people and it is not intended that the funds should go only to Local Board member agencies or local government agencies.

Having stated what it is not, what does the National Board want this program to be? As we read the law, EFSP should:

- create inclusive local coalitions that meet regularly to determine the best use of funds and to monitor their use in their respective communities;
- treat every program year as a fresh opportunity to reassess what particular

community needs (e.g., on-site feeding or utility assistance, mass shelter or homelessness prevention, etc.) should be addressed;

- encourage agencies to work together to emphasize their respective strengths, work out common problems, and prevent duplication of effort; and,

- examine whether the program is helping to meet the needs of special populations such as minorities, Native Americans, veterans, families with children, the elderly, and the handicapped.

It is our intention to re-emphasize that this program has a commitment to emergency services. We continue to view it as an opportunity for building a cohesive emergency structure which can, for example,

- coordinate the assistance provided, across agencies, to families and individuals applying for rental, mortgage, or utility assistance;

- enhance a food banking network that is economical in its cost and broad in its coverage;

- reinforce creative cooperation among feeding and sheltering sites to ensure help for street populations most in need; and,

- establish or maintain a system that complements rather than supplants existing private and governmental efforts to provide rent, mortgage, or utility assistance.

The National Board is aware that much is asked of our voluntary Local Boards and LROs, and very little administrative funding is provided. But the cooperative model that EFSP has helped to create can be a useful vehicle for many governmental and community-based programs. As a group, local providers can accomplish much:

- initiating a dialogue with local offices of Federal entities such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture to take full advantage of excess commodities and its other programs or with the U.S. Department of Labor's Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA);

- working with Federal programs that require the input of local providers such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant or Emergency Shelter Grant and the Department of Health and Human Services' Health Care for the Homeless;

- pooling agency efforts to gain Federal (for example, HUD's Transitional Housing Program) and private foundation grants;

- leveraging EFSP funds within the community by encouraging matches of local EFSP allocations from State and local governments and private resources; and,

- exchanging ideas on administrative and accounting methods that can improve delivery of services and focus on the collaborative rather than the competitive aspects of agency relations.

Eleven years ago this program began as a one-time effort to help address urgent needs. The survival of this public-private partnership is not only a testament to needs, but also to the effectiveness of EFSP as an example of local decisionmaking and community responsibility in attempting to meet those needs.

EFSP is a reminder of this nation's willingness to confront difficult problems within the society in new ways. But most importantly, EFSP has fed and sheltered homeless and hungry people, it has maintained homes and the families in those homes, and it has created useful public-private partnerships within communities.

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Section 1.0 Background and Introduction

The Emergency Food and Shelter Program was established on March 24, 1983, with the signing of the "Jobs Stimulus Bill," Public Law 98-8. That legislation created a National Board, chaired by FEMA, which consisted of representatives of the American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA; the Salvation Army; Council of Jewish Federations, Inc.; United Way of America; and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

Since that first piece of legislation in 1983, through its authorization under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (Public Law 100-77—signed into law on July 24, 1987, subsequently reauthorized under Public Law 100-628, signed into law on November 7, 1988), the Emergency Food and Shelter Program has distributed almost \$1.3 billion to over 10,800 social service agencies in more than 2,500 communities across the country.

From its inception, the unique features of this program have been the partnerships it has established. At the national level, the Federal government