**USCCB FY2021 Afghan Placement and Assistance (APA)**

**Additional Direct Assistance – Procedures and Eligibility**

**Updated January 5, 2022**

***Procedures***

USCCB has created an Afghan Placement and Assistance (APA) Additional Direct Assistance application and reimbursement process to provide oversight in the distribution of these funds. Affiliates can submit an application for each case they believe is eligible for the fund. USCCB staff will review applications to determine whether clients meet the eligibility criteria, which will result in full approval, partial approval, or denial of the request. Affiliates may submit one additional application for clients if continued assistance is needed. Upon spending the supplemental direct assistance funds in their entirety, affiliates will submit to USCCB an itemized expense form in order to be reimbursed. The fund is only available for clients who are in their APA period. This application and funding structure applies only to FY 2021 and FY 2022 arrivals (September 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022). The funds must be expended no later than the last day of the client’s APA period, but the funds may be used to prepay expenses extending beyond September 30, 2022 and/or up to three months beyond the client’s APA period. Prepayment of expenses refers to fixed-rate costs, such as flat-rate internet, but not to fluctuating, use-based costs like utilities.

Applications must be submitted during the client’s APA period and **it is encouraged to submit applications as soon as possible to allow USCCB sufficient time to review/approve before the client’s service period is complete**. Applications for FY 2021 and FY 2022 arrivals will be accepted through December 12, 2022 or until the USCCB network exhausts the additional direct assistance fund, whichever is sooner. All reimbursements must be sent to USCCB by January 9, 2023. All expenses need to be incurred before an expense report is submitted, only **one** expense report should be submitted incorporating all expenses tied to a client, **and** should be submitted no later than the reimbursement deadline (January 9, 2023). Reimbursements/expense reports should be emailed to ClientEmergencyFunding@usccb.org, **not submitted in MRIS**. USCCB will process these invoices manually.

***Funding***

USCCB has established funding ceilings correlated with case size and a maximum of three months current/prepaid expenses per application. A case size of 1 can receive up to $5,000 per application, a case size of 2-5 members can receive up to $8,000 per application, and a case size of 6 or more members can receive up to $10,500 per application. Sample cost breakdowns can be found below:

**Case Size 1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| $1,000  | Average cost for one month's rent |
| $200  | Average cost for one month's utilities |
| $500 | **One-time** connectivity cost per household (critical for telemedicine, school etc)$250 pre-paid internet$250 Chromebook **or** $250 a smart phone per school-aged child$250 Chromebook **or** $250 smartphone for adults per household |
| $250 | Average cost for one month’s groceries for a case size of 1 |
| $1,950 | Total for month one\*\*May fluctuate due to the number of school-age children in the case |
| $1,450 | Recurring monthly costs |

**Case Size 2-5**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| $1,250  | Average cost for one month's rent |
| $250  | Average cost for one month's utilities |
| $500 | **One-time** connectivity cost per household (critical for telemedicine, school etc)$250 pre-paid internet$250 Chromebook **or** $250 a smart phone per school-aged child$250 Chromebook **or** $250 smartphone for adults per household |
| $1000 | Average cost for one month’s groceries for a case size of 5 |
| $3,000 | Total for month one\*\*May fluctuate due to the # of school-aged children in the case |
| $2,500 | Recurring monthly costs |

**Case Size 6+**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| $1,550  | Average cost for one month's rent |
| $300  | Average cost for one month's utilities |
| $500 | **One-time** connectivity cost per household (critical for telemedicine, school etc)$250 pre-paid internet$250 Chromebook **or** $250 a smart phone per school-aged child$250 Chromebook **or** $250 smartphone for adults per household |
| $1,500 | Average cost for one month’s groceries for a case size of 8 |
| $3,850 | Total for month one\*\*May fluctuate due to the # of school-aged children in the case |
| $3,350 | Recurring monthly costs |

***Client Eligibility for Housing Assistance***

USCCB staff will review each application and assess eligibility based on certain criteria. These criteria were developed based on quantitative and qualitative observations on the effects of COVID-19 in addition to housing shortages and increased rent costs unrelated to COVID-19. For example, nationwide there is a general lack of affordable housing which is exacerbated in some cases by limited employment options. Another example may be that clients from different households, families, or cases are no longer being housed together as often in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Similarly, new arrivals are frequently waiting out their voluntary stay-at-home period in a hotel (or similar accommodations) for up to 14 days before moving in with their U.S. tie or stateside relatives/friends to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in accordance with CDC guidance. To that end, the following eligibility categories were established for housing assistance:

* Clients who already have or are planning to quarantine, self-isolate, or voluntarily stay-at-home in a hotel (or similar accommodation) in accordance with CDC guidance. This funding can be used to cover the hotel stay and/or the rent and utilities for the case’s more permanent housing after the hotel stay.
* Clients who would typically be placed in housing with their U.S. tie, relatives, friends, or other client(s) but will instead incur higher housing/utility costs to live in a separate household.
* Clients who need rent/utility assistance after experiencing financial hardship such as lack/loss of employment, public benefits, or other material needs support systems.

To prevent duplication of services, affiliates must indicate on the application whether any other federal or local resources are available to meet the clients’ needs instead of the supplemental direct assistance fund. USCCB anticipates the most likely applicants for housing assistance will be families that cannot reside in one apartment due to minimum habitability requirements, single clients (particularly in high cost of living locations), clients intending to live with their U.S. tie, clients exposed to COVID-19, and clients living in a household in which one member has tested positive for COVID-19. On a case by case basis, USCCB staff will consider applications for clients who do not fall within the eligibility categories but whose housing access is severely impacted.

***Client Eligibility for Technology Assistance***

In response to local/agency regulations and CDC guidance affiliates are limiting clients’ exposure to other clients, affiliate staff, employers, and/or other service providers. Providing case management remotely requires clients to have access to the appropriate technology (e.g. tablets, computers, smartphones) in order to receive the full complement of APA services. Most often, clients are using technology to enroll/engage in employment services, English language classes, cultural orientation sessions, remote learning (particularly for school-aged children), and telehealth/telemedicine. Furthermore, it is imperative for clients to access technology in order to successfully integrate into their communities. To address these needs, the following eligibility categories were established for technology assistance:

* Clients who are school-aged children that need to access remote learning/online schools
* Clients with acute medical needs, Class A physical/mental health conditions, or Class B physical/mental health conditions who need to access telehealth or telemedicine services
* Employable clients who need to access employment services, ESL, and/or cultural orientation, or who need technology to engage with employers but are unable to complete these activities in-person.

To prevent duplication of services, affiliates must indicate on the application whether any other federal or local resources are available to meet the clients’ needs instead of the supplemental direct assistance fund. USCCB anticipates caretakers/guardians of school-aged children, clients with acute medical needs or Class A/B conditions, and employable clients will be most likely to qualify for this assistance. On a case by case basis, USCCB staff will consider applications for clients who do not fall within the eligibility categories but for whom technology assistance would significantly enhance their ability to overcome challenges or integrate into their communities.

***Client Eligibility for Nutrition Assistance***

In January 2022, an updated Cooperative Agreement was released which includes nutrition assistance as an eligible expense under this Additional Direct Assistance Program. Due to processing challenges posed by COVID-19 and other factors, many local benefits offices are unable to process client applications for food stamps in a timely manner, if at all. In some locations, Social Security Administration (SSA) offices are facing delays or are unable to issue Social Security Cards (SSCs), which can prevent clients from applying for benefits due to a lack of documentation (e.g. SSC). Furthermore, due to impacts on the grocery supply chain many products are more expensive than in recent pre-pandemic years. To offset these impacts, the following eligibility categories were established for nutrition assistance:

* Clients who are the caretaker/guardian of school-aged children that are participating in remote or hybrid learning, which increases the number of meals children are eating at home (potentially increasing the family’s grocery expenses)
* Clients who are facing delays in receiving their SSC and/or food stamps
* Clients with medical, mobility, and/or COVID-19 related health challenges (e.g., long-lasting COVID-19, isolation/quarantine period, etc.) who would benefit from grocery delivery services or other supports.

Nutrition assistance can be met through the provision of food items, direct assistance to purchase food items, and/or gift cards issued to a grocery store for the purpose of nutrition assistance. This assistance should be provided until the receipt of food stamps or until the individual or family is able to provide food for himself, herself, or themselves. To the extent possible, affiliates should base nutrition assistance amounts off their local SNAP monthly benefits and case size.

To prevent duplication of services, affiliates must indicate on the application whether any other federal or local resources are available to meet the clients’ needs instead of the additional direct assistance fund. USCCB anticipates clients with challenges to obtaining social security cards, Employment Authorization Documents, I-94s, or resettled in locations where the local food stamp office and/or SSA office is facing processing challenges will be most likely to qualify for this assistance. On a case-by-case basis, USCCB staff will consider applications for clients who do not fall within the eligibility categories but for whom nutrition assistance would significantly enhance their ability to overcome challenges, including those posed by COVID-19.

***Case File Documentation Requirements***

In October 2020, PRM clarified that case file documentation of Supplemental DA expenditures should be maintained to the same standard as regular APA direct assistance. To that end, case file documentation must include (at minimum):

A signed/dated RF-35 (Client Acknowledgement of Receipt of Direct Assistance) for each supplemental DA expenditure. A separate RF-35 must be used for each expenditure.

Source documentation such as receipts, bills, invoices, written acknowledgement of payment from vendor/landlord, etc. for all supplemental DA expenses.