

# Application for Funding

## **I. AGENCY INFORMATION: No longer than two pages**

### **a. Describe a brief history of your agency including:**

#### **i. Date of incorporation**

In 1813, the Congress of the Republic of Texas incorporated Richmond and eighteen other towns. Later in the same year, the County of Fort Bend was created from portions of Austin, Harris, and Brazoria County.

#### **ii. Length of time agency has been in operation**

Fort Bend County Department of Social Services has been in existence for approximately 65 years. Initially it was created by County Commissioners Court to fulfill the mandate of Article 2351 of Vernon's Annotated Civil Statutes, which directs County government to provide support for paupers. In the 1950's the department, which was called the County Welfare Office, was established to improve coordination of efforts throughout the County. Over the years the name of the department has changed to what we now know as Fort Bend County Social Services.

#### **iii. Description of program offered**

The purpose of Fort Bend County Social Services is to provide short-term assistance to residents in need. Currently, the department provides utility, rent/mortgage, food, medication, emergency shelter, transitional supportive housing, pauper/indigent burial services, and Benefits Bank (assist with completing SNAP, TANF, CHIP, Medicaid and Medicare applications) to the residents of Fort Bend County. Other services include unmet emergency needs and case management services to the elderly, homeless, veterans, flood survivors, and victims of crime. All emergency assistance services provided by Fort Bend County Social Services (FBCSS) are provided to residents once per fiscal year. Due to limited funding County funded emergency assistance, services are capped per service. Currently the County provides a maximum assistance of a total of \$150.00 for utility assistance, \$600.00 for medication assistance, up to \$500.00 for rental/mortgage assistance, \$350.00 for emergency shelter assistance, \$97.00 for food assistance, and \$500 per month not to exceed 4 months for transitional supportive housing assistance. Clients requesting Emergency Assistance Services from FBCSS must be able to demonstrate a need for services and provide documentation that demonstrates he/she has exhausted all resources. Case Management Services are provided to the County's most vulnerable population to include the elderly, the homeless, victims of crime, flood survivors, and veterans. Case Management services are provided for a minimum of six months and a maximum of one year. Through this service clients are connected with other services provided by partnering agencies and those agencies who are members of Fort Bend County Collaborative Information System (FBCCIS). In addition, the department plans and implements the annual "Back to School Bash" and "Santa is Coming to Fort Bend County" events for school age children whose household incomes are at or below 180% of the poverty level.

**iv. Length of time agency has offered emergency assistance**

FBCSS has provided emergency assistance for well over 30 years receiving funding from the County (itself) and the Emergency Food and Shelter Program to provide these services.

b. Identify your experience with local and federal grant administration to include:

- i. Funding Amount
- ii. Funding Source
- iii. Activities & Service Units Funded
- iv. Monitoring Issues/Findings/Successes **(Please see Table below)**

FBCSS has been a recipient of the following funding sources:

<b>Funding Amount</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Service Units Funded</b>	<b>Monitoring Issues/Findings/Successes</b>
\$240,607.00	EFSP Phase 35	Rent, Utilities, Food	No monitoring issues. To date, 797 clients have been assisted.
\$200,000.00	Texas Veterans Commission	Rent, Utilities, Transportation, Childcare	No Monitoring Issues To date, 94 Veterans have been assisted.
\$22,619.00	City of Sugarland	Utility Assistance for residents of City of Sugarland only	No monitoring issues. To date, 9 clients have been assisted.
\$58,350.00	Reliant Energy	Utility Assistance- Reliant Customers only	No monitoring issues. To date, 44 clients have been assisted.
\$7,500.00	TXU Energy	Utility Assistance – TXU Energy Customers only	No monitoring issues. A total of 20 clients received services.
\$50,000.00	Episcopal Health Foundation	Rental Assistance	No monitoring issues. A total of 105 clients received services.
\$126,211.00	Fort Bend Recovers	Basic Needs/Unmet Needs	No monitoring issues. To date, 122 flood survivors have been assisted.
\$157,696.00	Office of the Governor Victims of Crime Act	Emergency Assistance/Case Management services to victims of crime	No monitoring issues. A total of 270 clients received services.
\$300,318.00	County	Rent, Utilities, Food, Medication, Emergency Shelter, Transitional Supportive Housing, and Unmet Emergency Needs	No monitoring issues. A total of 1,086 clients received services.

**c. Provide history of use of HMIS or Comparable Database. If agency is only applying for Food/Other Food, this question not applicable.**

FBBCSS has utilized HMIS to collect data for the EFSP program for the past two years and before that, it used it for the ESG program. In the last two years, ten staff members have had access HMIS and have utilized it to ensure there were no duplication of services for rent and utility assistance.

**II. PROJECT INFORMATION: No longer than three pages**

- a. Provide a statement of need for EFSP Funds. This should include but is not limited to :

**i. A description and number of project beneficiaries you currently and will serve with EFSP funds.**

During EFSP Phase 35, FBCSS received a total of \$240,607 to assist clients with rent/mortgage, utilities and food. To date, 797 clients have received services with 103 receiving rental assistance, 359 receiving utility assistance and 335 receiving a food voucher. In EFSP Phase 36 FBCSS anticipates providing services to 1,451 beneficiaries, with 506 receiving a food voucher, 300 receiving rental assistance and 645 receiving utility assistance.

**ii. Current need and impact for EFSP funded activities in your community**

**a. Please be specific using as much data driven and supported information as possible.**

According to a needs assessment (A report on the Demographic Changes and Changing Needs of Fort Bend County by The George Foundation) conducted in Fort Bend County in the summer of 2011, using focus groups, interviews and randomized telephone surveys, respondents identified food and housing as the most critical needs in Fort Bend County in the area of human services. Furthermore, participants listed affordable housing, homeless shelters, food assistance and basic needs as not being met by current services in the region. In 2016 United Way received 28,187 calls from Fort Bend County residents with the majority of the calls coming from the following zip codes 77489 (Missouri City), 77471 (Rosenberg), 77053 (Houston), 77477 (Stafford), and 77469 (Richmond). The top needs of Fort Bend callers were medical care, food, utility assistance, rent/mortgage assistance, low-income housing, children/youth services, disaster services, financial assistance, transportation and preparing income tax.

In fiscal year 2018 (October 2017 through September 2018) Fort Bend County Social Services (FBCSS) served 2,881 clients. Of which **384** received a food voucher, **84** received a medication voucher, **501** received rent/mortgage assistance, **171** received transitional supportive housing/emergency shelter, **1,279** received utility assistance, **134** received case management services, **30** received assistance with completing the SNAP, TANF, CHIP, Medicaid and Medicare applications and **298** received other services provided by the department. Of the clients served in the same fiscal year, 67% reported living at or below 100% of the poverty level (\$25,100.00 annually for a family of 4). According to the needs assessment and US Census data, the number of people living in poverty in Fort Bend County

continues to increase. The U.S. Census Bureau indicates 8% of Fort Bend County's population lives in poverty (61,186: 2017 U.S. Census Bureau). Meal Gap data in 2018 reported that 14.8% (approximately 100,920) of Fort Bend County's population are food insecure, i.e., they do not receive three nutritious meals a day. In fiscal year 2016, 70% of the clients receiving a food voucher from FBCSS department reported they had been without food for 1 to 6 days. Of the same clients 46% reported the last time they had purchased groceries was 2 weeks or more. Fifty-two percent of the clients reported that when purchasing groceries they go without other things to include medications, paying rent/mortgage, paying utility bills, and other basic needs. When comparing FBCSS fiscal year 2014 to fiscal year 2015 it was noted that there was a 24% increase in the number of families/ individuals living at or below 100% poverty level. When comparing FBCSS fiscal year 2016 to fiscal year 2017, there was a 28% increase in the number of families/individuals living at or below 100% poverty level. In fiscal year 2017 (October 2016 through September 2017) 3,974 individuals requested rent/mortgage, utility and food assistance. In this same year 2,233 actually received assistance with one of the three services from Fort Bend County Social Services (FBCSS). In 2016, the state eliminated the Lite-Up Texas program, a program that subsidized electricity bills during the summer months for low-income residents. According to the Houston Chronicle, hundreds of thousands have been left in the position of having to choose between paying their electricity bill or buying food and other necessities.

### **iii. How your organization differs from similar providers**

FBCSS is a governmental entity whose target audience is to serve county residents in need of emergency assistance. Unlike other providers, FBCSS has 19 full time employees and 3 part time employees. FBCSS maintains offices in East, West and North quadrants of the County, thus allowing for easy access to services. In the last five years, FBCSS has expanded its services to provide ongoing Case Management services. These services have been targeted to the County's most vulnerable population to include: the elderly, the homeless, victims of crimes, flood survivors, veterans, and individuals with disability to name a few. Vulnerable populations are initially identified through the County's Emergency Assistance Programs and then referred to a Case Manager for further assessment of need. It is the goal of FBCSS to examine each client case and identify the root cause of the clients concerns and find solutions to his/her need.

### **iv. Partnerships and collaborations utilized to enhance effectiveness.**

#### **1. Be specific as to how you refer out and what those services are.**

**For example, are you referring clients to other partners for service your agency does not currently offer?**

#### **2. Expand how long you've maintained this partnership.**

**3. Letters of support from partner agencies are encouraged. (Please include these additional attachments. This is not included in the Section II Page Requirement.)**

In 2015, Fort Bend County established the Fort Bend County Collaborative Information System (FBCCIS) which was made up of five non-profit organizations to include Second Mile Mission, East Fort Bend Human Needs, Fort Bend Meals on Wheels, Katy Christian Ministries, Rosenberg/Richmond Helping Hands and two county departments that include Fort Bend County Social Services and Fort Bend County Emergency Medical Services (Community Paramedic Program). In the last year, four additional partners have joined the FBCCIS. They include Fort Bend Hope, Access Health, Rosenberg Housing Authority and Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services. The mission of the collaborative is to implement a collaborative data collection and sharing system that will coordinate client information, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery over time. The collaborative has afforded the organizations to be connected electronically and has created ease in referring, assessing and meeting the needs of clients almost seamlessly. In instances when the needs of the clients cannot be met completely by one organizations, another partner steps in and ensures all the client's needs are met. The Collaborative has been in existence for the past three years and meets regularly and daily when necessary to meet the needs the County's most vulnerable population.

**b. Explain how EFSP funds will used to supplement and extend existing food and shelter programs.**

EFSP funds will enable Fort Bend County Social Services to supplement existing services to include food, shelter, and utility assistance and expand the reach of services to individuals and families throughout Fort Bend County. Funds allocated in the EFSP Phase 36 will be used to enhance services to Fort Bend County Residents by 63% in rent and mortgage assistance, 118% in utility assistance and 240% in food assistance. Without EFSP funding, more residents in Fort Bend County will go without basic human needs which could prove to be devastating, especially during extreme weather conditions in the winter and summer months.

**III. HOMELESS/FORMERLY HOMELESS INVOLVEMENT: No longer than one page**

**a. Federal provisions require that agencies funded under the Emergency Food and Shelter program involve homeless individuals and families in the operation of their program, to the extent practicable. The purpose of this provision is to ensure that the intended beneficiaries of service have a voice in how these services are delivered. Therefore, please describe the involvement of homeless or formerly homeless individuals and families in the operation of your program. If this involvement is not practicable for your agency, please explain.**

Currently Fort Bend County Social Services works in partnership with the Harris/Fort Bend Coalition for the Homeless. In 2013, FBCSS spearheaded the Fort Bend County Homeless Coalition. The purpose of the coalition is to bring together organizations in the county that provide services to the homeless, identify gaps in services and identify strategies to best meet the needs of clients with limited funding. Service providers include Fort Bend Family Promise, Salvation Army, Second Mile Mission, St. Laurence Catholic Church, Sugar Grove Church of Christ, Project Lift, Access Health, United Way of Greater Houston (Fort Bend), Fort Bend EMS, Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office and Fort Bend County Behavioral Health. In the last year, Fort Bend County Social Services served 171 clients presenting themselves as homeless and needing emergency shelter, or transitional supportive housing services. In 2013, Fort Bend County Social Services began the process of surveying clients who present themselves as homeless and/or formerly homeless to guide the development of program operations. When asked about the factors and/or indications that have led them to become homeless, 31% of the clients gave the following responses, criminal background, disabled, divorced, family abandonment, flooding, home fire, home flood, home loss, home repairs, in transition, incarcerated, loss of documents, medical expenses, relocated and substance abuse. 22% of the clients reported eviction/foreclosure, 11% of the clients were victims of domestic violence, 6% of the clients reported mental health, 25% reported at risk of eviction, loss of income/less hours of work, loss of support/death in the family, medical, relocation/transition and 5% reported being unemployed. When asked about gaps in services 11% of the clients reported "OTHER". "OTHER" responses are in parenthesis (No aftercare while in jail, no drug rehab programs, no veteran services, no domestic violence assistance, no moving services and no family support), 33% of the clients reported shelters, 17% of the clients reported resources, 13% of the clients reported employment, 22% of the clients reported affordable housing, 7% responded less than 2% (Childcare, food, gasoline, mental health treatment and medications). Of all clients, responding to this survey 100% of the clients reported English as their primary language 47% of the clients reported as African American, 49% as Caucasian, 1% as Other, 1% as Multi Racial and 2% as American Indian. 21% of the clients reported being unemployed while 79% reported having employment.

#### **IV. FINACIAL INFORMATION**

- a. Program Level Budget (Excel Spreadsheet)**
  - i. Follow the directions provided in the Excel Spreadsheet when completing budget. No additional budget information should be entered other than requested information.**
  - ii. For the period of February 1, 2018 to January 31, 2019**
- b. Audit Review**
  - i. Attach your latest audit or financial statement as directed in the Competition Overview Document.**

SEE ATTACHED

**V. INTAKE PROCEDURES:** No longer than one page.

a. Describe the step per each expense activity (Food Served Meals, Other Food, Mass Shelter, Rent/Mortgage, Utility Assistance) for which you are requesting funds. This should include but is not limited to the process a client goes through when applying for EFSP assistance:

**Food:** Clients are seen by appointment and walk-ins are welcome Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00am-5:00pm. When necessary, hours are extended to meet the need of the clients. Services are provided at two locations, the West End Location at 4520 Reading Road, Suite A-900, Rosenberg, Texas 77471 and the East End Location at 307 Texas Parkway, Suite 235, Missouri City, TX 77459. Required documents: proof of house hold income, Fort Bend County proof of residency, photo identification, and proof of need of demonstrating that all income has been exhausted. Eligibility requirements: clients are deemed eligible for food assistance if they provide required documentation, are residents of Fort Bend County and provide proof of need and or can demonstrate all income sources have been exhausted. The dollar amount of assistance is based upon "2012 Meal Gap Data Report" and is calculated at \$97.00 per household. Clients are allowed assistance one time per fiscal year.

**Rent/Mortgage:** Clients are seen by appointment and walk-ins are welcome Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00am-5:00pm. When necessary hours are extended to meet the needs of clients. Services are provided at two locations, the West End Location at 4520 Reading Road, Suite A-900, Rosenberg, Texas, 77471 and the East End location at 307 Texas Parkway, Suite 235, Missouri City, TX 77459. Required documents: proof of household income, Fort Bend County proof of residency, photo identification, proof of need by demonstrating that all income has been exhausted, provide current rental lease agreement, mortgage statement, or written statement from landlord stating one month's rent and due date. All aforementioned items must be in the client's name. Eligibility requirements: clients requesting rent/mortgage assistance must not be paying or planning to pay more than 75% of income on rent/mortgage, must be a resident of Fort Bend County, must demonstrate all household income has been exhausted and must provide all required documentation. Limitations: the following fees or taxes are not paid to include: property taxes or any other taxes related to the property, homeowners or renter's insurance, neighborhood association fees, sewage fees, legal fees, late fees, and condominium maintenance fees.

**Utility Assistance:** Clients are seen by appointment and walk-ins are welcome Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00am-5:00pm. When necessary hours are extended to meet the needs of clients. Services are provided at two locations the West End Location at 4520 Reading Road, Suite A-900, Rosenberg, TX. 77471 and the East End location at 307 Texas Parkway, Suite 235, Missouri City, TX 77459. Required documents: proof of household income, proof of residency of Fort Bend County, provide photo identification, proof of need by demonstrating that all income has been exhausted, provide original utility bill, all supporting documentation must be in client's name. Eligibility requirements: client must be a resident of Fort Bend County, demonstrate they have exhausted household income, provide required documentation and all supporting documentation must be in client's name. Limitations: Clients are allowed assistance one time per fiscal year. EFSP assistance is stabilizing clients from becoming homeless and/or going into foreclosures. Clients are also referred to the Thrive Program with United Way.

FBCSS ensures clients are only once per an EFSP Phase through the use of HMIS and its internal software program Caseworthy.

VI. FOR MASS SHELTERS AND SERVED MEALS ONLY: INDICATE THE LAST DATE THE AGENCY RECEIVED THE PERMITS AND/OR INSPECTIONS LISTED BELOW (if more than once facility, attach information for each facility):

Occupancy permit	<u>N/A</u>
Elevator Permit	<u>N/A</u>
Boiler Permit	<u>N/A</u>
Fire Code Inspection	<u>N/A</u>
Health Dept. Permit	<u>N/A</u>
Other	<u>N/A</u>