

Phase CARES
Emergency Food and Shelter
Program (EFSP)
Application for Funding

Application for Funding

Agency Name: Fort Bend County

LRO Number (if applicable): #782800006

I. AGENCY INFORMATION:

a. Provide a brief history of your agency:

i. Date of incorporation: 1813

ii. Length of time agency has been in operation: 207 years

iii. Length of time agency has offered emergency assistance: 30 years

iv. Description of programs offered:

The goal of Fort Bend County Social Services (FBCSS) is to provide short-term assistance to residents in need. The department provides utility, rent/mortgage, food, medication, emergency shelter, transitional supportive housing, pauper/indigent burial services, and Benefits Bank (assistance with completing SNAP, TANF, CHIP, and Medicaid and Medicare applications) to the residents of Fort Bend County. Other services include unmet emergency needs and case management services to seniors, the 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 an annual maximum of \$150 for utility assistance, \$600 for medication assistance, up to \$500 for rental/mortgage assistance, \$350 for emergency shelter assistance, \$97 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 demonstrate a need for services and provide documentation that proves s/he has exhausted all resources. Case management services are provided to the county’s most vulnerable populations such as the homeless, victims of crime, disaster survivors and veterans for a minimum of six months and a maximum of one year. Through case management assistance, clients are connected with other services provided by partner agencies including those who are members of Fort Bend County Collaborative Information System (FBCCIS). FBCCIS also 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.



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

i. Funding Amount:

1. \$295,832
2. \$250,000
3. \$21,485
4. \$45,775
5. \$35,000 (Beginning of FY 2020)
6. \$29,773
7. \$252,313 (over 2 years)
8. \$303,322

ii. Funding Source:

1. EFSP Phase 36
2. Texas Veterans Commission
3. City of Sugarland
4. Reliant Energy
5. TXU Energy
6. Fort Bend Recovers
7. Office of the Governor Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)
8. Fort Bend County General Fund

iii. Activities & Service Units Funded:

1. Rent, Utilities, Food
2. Rent, Utilities, Transportation, Childcare
3. Utility Assistance for residents of City of Sugarland only
4. Utility Assistance- Reliant Customers only
5. Utility Assistance – TXU Energy Customers only
6. Basic Needs/Unmet Needs
7. Emergency Assistance/Case Management

iv. Successes/Monitoring Issues/Findings:

1. No monitoring issues. To date, 1,172 clients have been assisted.
2. No monitoring Issues, To date, 138 Veterans have been assisted.
3. No monitoring issues. To date, 55 clients have been assisted.

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

FBCSS has utilized HMIS to collect data for the EFSP program for the past three years and prior to that, HMIS was used for the Emergency Solutions Grant. In the last three years, eleven staff members have had access to HMIS and have utilized the system to ensure against duplication of rent and utility assistance.

II. PROJECT INFORMATION:

a. Provide a statement of need for EFSP Funds:

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

During EFSP Phase 36, Fort Bend County Social Services (FBCSS) received a total of \$295,832 to assist clients with rent/mortgage, utilities and food. To date, 1172 clients have received services with 149 receiving rental/mortgage assistance, 511 receiving utility assistance and 512 clients receiving food vouchers.

Based on the funding request for EFSP CARES, FBCSS anticipates providing services to 3041 beneficiaries, with 900 clients receiving rental/mortgage assistance, 1180 clients receiving utility

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- ii. Current **need** for and **impact** of EFSP funded activities in your community. Please be specific using as much data driven and supported information as possible.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, FBC Social Services has been inundated with requests for assistance. Staff have continued to assist clients via scheduled telephone appointments throughout the "Stay Home" order issued by the County Judge,

- In March, FBCSS offices received 2826 calls and in April, the offices received 7,306 calls.
- FBCSS scheduled 547 appointments in March and 906 appointments in April.
- Combined for March and April, staff assessed and enrolled 1,154 individuals/families.
- In March, the FBCSS In-box received 169 requests for assistance and in April, that number increased to 687 requests for assistance.
- Approximately 1627 individuals viewed the FBCSS website and in April, that number increased to 3380 individuals viewing the website.
- FBCSS has initiated "Adopt A Family - Fort Bend". Of the 133 families that have requested assistance through this program, 97 have been helped.

Other related activities include:

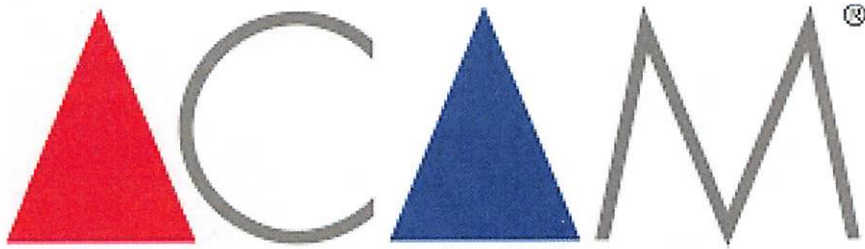
80 Boxes of food delivered

288 food vouchers were distributed

124 individuals are currently scheduled for food appointments

67 families received \$100 gift cards to HEB

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iii. How your organization differs from similar providers:

As a government entity, Fort Bend County Social Services differs from other providers in that rather than targeting one specific vulnerable population or group, assistance is available for all eligible Fort Bend County residents. To provide these comprehensive services, FBCSS has 21 employees and maintains offices in East and West quadrants of the county. In the last seven years, FBCSS has expanded its services to provide ongoing case management. These services have been targeted to the county's most vulnerable populations including but not limited to: seniors, the homeless, victims of crimes, flood survivors, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. Vulnerable residents 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, identify the root cause of each client's concerns and tailor 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 services your agency does not currently offer?

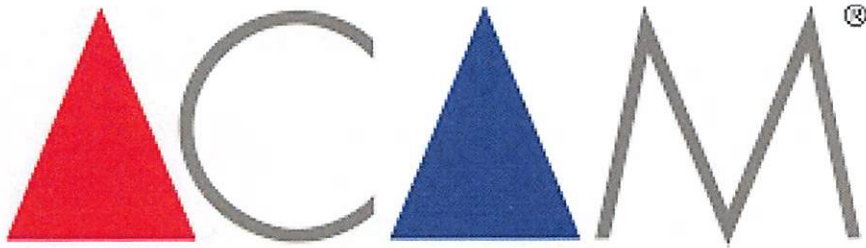
In 2015, Fort Bend County established the Fort Bend County Collaborative Information System (FBCCIS) which was made up of five non-profit organizations: Second Mile Mission, East Fort Bend Human Needs, Fort Bend Meals on Wheels, Katy Christian Ministries, Rosenberg/Richmond Helping Hands and two county departments that include Fort Bend County Social Services and Fort Bend County Emergency Medical Services (Community Paramedic Program). To date, six additional partners have joined the FBCCIS including Fort Bend Hope, Access Health, Rosenberg Housing Authority, Fort Bend Clubhouse, Fort Bend Senior Meals on Wheels and Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services. The mission of this joint effort 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 electronically connected the organizations, thus creating ease in referring, assessing and seamlessly meeting the needs of clients. In instances where client needs cannot be met completely by a single organization, another partner steps in to ensure all the client's needs are met.

2. Expand on how long you have maintained this partnership.

The Fort Bend County Collaborative Information System (FBCCIS) has been in existence since 2015. The Collaborative has regularly scheduled monthly meetings and as-needed subcommittee discussions to meet the needs of the county's most vulnerable populations.

3. Letters of support from partner agencies are encouraged. (Include as additional attachments.)

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- b. Explain how EFSP funds will be used to **supplement** and **extend** existing food and shelter activities. Explain how EFSP funds will be used to increase the number of clients served in each activity proposed or enhance the services. Describe the sources of the non-EFSP funding proposed in your budget. (For further clarification, the Local Board is looking for a response that tells us what services your agency can provide **without** this funding, and how this funding will aid your agency in serving more clients. Please make sure you're telling the Local Board how many more services you can add to your current activities **WITH** this money.)

During EFSP Phase 36, FBCSS received a total of \$295,832 to assist clients with rent/mortgage, utilities and food. To date, 1172 clients have received services with 149 receiving rental/mortgage assistance, 511 receiving utility assistance and 512 clients receiving food vouchers.

Based on the funding request for EFSP CARES, FBCSS anticipates providing services to 3041 beneficiaries, with 900 clients receiving rental/mortgage assistance, 1180 clients receiving utility assistance and 961 clients receiving food vouchers.

Each year, EFSP funds doubles the existing general Fort Bend County funds provided for social services to individuals and families throughout the County. This enables Fort Bend County Social Services to supplement and extend existing food and shelter activities by approximately 50% annually.

Without EFSP CARES funding, a large percentage of Fort Bend County residents will go without basic human needs or services. In the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the lack of these basic needs and services could prove devastating.

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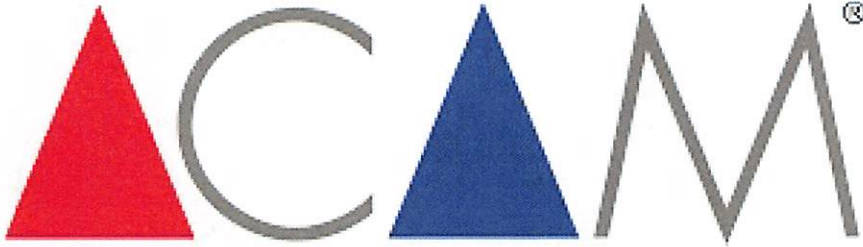
III. HOMELESS/FORMERLY HOMELESS INVOLVEMENT:

- 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 so that the intended beneficiaries of service have a voice in how these services are delivered. **Please describe the involvement of homeless/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 coalition brings together organizations in the county that provide services to the homeless, identify gaps in services and develop 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 223 clients presenting themselves as homeless and needing emergency shelter or transitional supportive housing services. In 2013, to guide the development of program operations, Fort Bend County Social Services initiated the process of surveying clients who present themselves as homeless and/or formerly homeless. When asked about the factors 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. Of the clients, 22% reported eviction/foreclosure, 11% of the clients were victims of domestic violence, 6% of the clients reported mental health issues, 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". The "OTHER" response category included: no aftercare while in jail, no drug rehab programs, no veteran services, no domestic violence assistance, no moving services and no family support while 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, 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. In terms of race, 47% reported as African American, 49% ▣

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IV. FINANCIAL 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 June 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021
- b. Audit Review: Attach your latest audit or financial statement as directed in the Competition Overview Document.

V. INTAKE PROCEDURES:

- a. Describe the steps 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:
 - i. Days and hours of operation:

Prior to COVID-19 Pandemic - 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

- ii. Required documentation:

Food: Proof of household income, Fort Bend County proof of residency, photo identification, and proof of need demonstrating that all income has been exhausted.

Rent/Mortgage: 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.

Utilities: proof of household income, proof of residency of Fort Bend County, provide photo

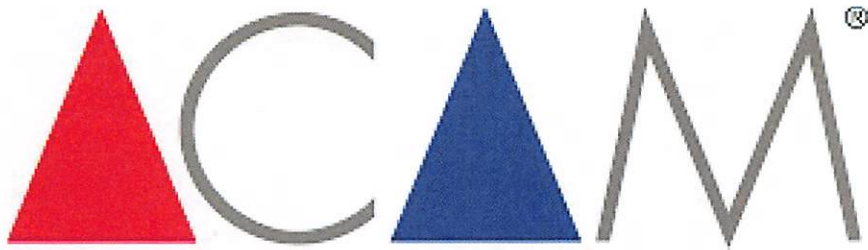
- iii. Eligibility requirements:

Food: 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 \$130 per household. Clients are allowed assistance one time per fiscal year.

Rent/Mortgage: 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.

Utilities: 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.

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- iv. How is your EFSP activity assistance stabilizing your beneficiaries for future independence?
1. Per EFSP regulations, clients receiving Utility, Rental or Mortgage Assistance are only allowed that service once per an EFSP Phase. Please describe the process of how your agency ensures clients are not receiving undue benefit and/or any other financial assistance limits.

EFSP assistance is stabilizing clients from becoming homeless and/or going into foreclosures. Taking away housing assistance will not help struggling individuals and families find gainful employment, receive quality education, or obtain on the job training necessary to alleviate poverty. Research shows that the lack of stable housing can result in the loss of employment (Desmond & Gershenson, 2016), interrupt student learning and decrease academic achievement (Bennan, Reed, & Sturtevant, 2014).

Clients are also referred to the Thrive Program with United Way. FBCSS ensures clients are assisted only once per EFSP Phase through the use of HMIS and its internal software program, Case worthy.

VI. COVID-19 RESPONSE:

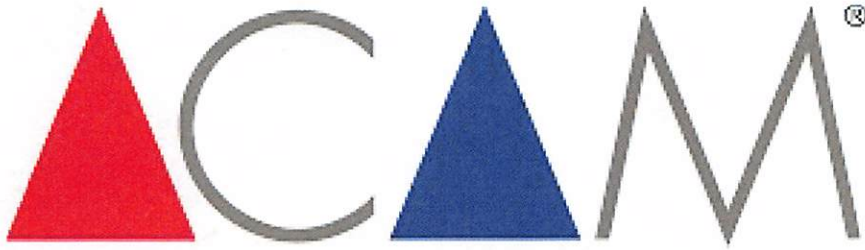
- a. Please describe your agency's current operational status, explaining how you have modified services during this period of crisis?

Utilizing Best Practices and public health protocols, Fort Bend County Social Services (FBCSS) has been in full operation throughout the "Stay Home" Order. Our offices are accessible via telephone, Monday-Friday from 8-5. While FBCSS continued to serve our constituents, our physical offices were closed to the general public. We will continue to limit the number of visitors in the actual offices thus continuing to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

Effectively providing services requires extensive interaction with the public. To assist residents in need and safeguard both clients and staff, FBCSS modified its service delivery plan at the very beginning of the COVID-19 Crisis. Bearing in mind the continued threat of the coronavirus, FBCSS will continue with this modified service delivery plan:

- As essential staff, case workers and eligibility workers worked full-time from home during the "Stay Home" order. +

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

Occupancy Permit	N/A _____
Elevator Permit	N/A _____
Boiler Permit	N/A _____
Fire Code Inspection	N/A _____
Health Dept. Permit	N/A _____
Other	N/A _____

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