

## Los Alamos County Individual Emergency Grants Q & A

1. May recipients use Fund payments to provide emergency financial assistance to individuals and families directly impacted by a loss of income due to the COVID-19 public health emergency?

Yes, if a government determines such assistance to be a necessary expenditure. Such assistance could include, for example, a program to assist individuals with payment of overdue rent or mortgage payments to avoid eviction or foreclosure and other emergency individual needs. Such assistance should be structured in a manner to ensure as much as possible, within the realm of what is administratively feasible, that such assistance is necessary.
2. May Fund payments be used to replace foregone utility fees? If not, can Fund payments be used as a direct subsidy payment to all utility account holders?

Fund payments may not be used for government revenue replacement, including the replacement of unpaid utility fees. Fund payments may be used for subsidy payments to electricity account holders to the extent that the subsidy payments are deemed by the recipient to be necessary expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and meet the other criteria of section 601(d) of the Social Security Act outlined in the Guidance. For example, if determined to be a necessary expenditure, a government could provide grants to individuals facing economic hardship to allow them to pay their utility fees and thereby continue to receive essential services.
3. Is an increase in expenses due to the COVID-19 public health emergency considered to be a valid reason to apply for funds? For example, if an individual is billed for COVID-19 testing or childcare expenses have increased.

This may fall under “other pertinent circumstance” which would require a narrative that describes what that circumstance was. **We have presented the question to our program manager for clarification, but may not receive clear guidance by the time of the deadline to submit your application. You may submit in your application for consideration as a necessary expenditure or one to be considered under the three categories covered by our program (Housing/Utility/Childcare), but it may or may not be eligible.**
4. Are Rental Assistance Voucher (Section 8) recipient’s ineligible to apply for CARES Act funds?

Rental Assistance Voucher (Section 8)\_recipients are eligible to apply for utility assistance and childcare assistance, but not rental assistance.
5. If applicant has already received funding through the County’s Utilities Assistance Program (UAP), are they eligible to apply for CARES Act utility assistance funding?

Applicant is not eligible for CARES Act utility assistance funding if they have already received County’s Utilities Assistance Program (UAP) within the same time frame. To the extent they have not received assistance, and applicant can apply for the time frame not covered.
6. Will CARES Act funding cover senior care?

No, Cares Act funding does not include funding for senior care.
7. Do applicants have to both reside and work in Los Alamos County?

No, applicants are only required to reside in Los Alamos County.

8. Is the CARES Act Application available in Spanish?

No, application is only available in English.

9. Will utility assistance funds cover wood if a firewood burning stove is only source of heating?

This may fall under “other pertinent circumstance” which would require a narrative that describes what that circumstance was. **We have presented the question to our program manager for clarification, but may not receive clear guidance by the time of the deadline to submit your application. You may submit in your application for consideration as a necessary expenditure or one to be considered as a utility, but it may or may not be eligible.**

10. On the application, it states being 65 or older or having a health condition that places one at increased risk of getting the virus is a reason for hardship. Is it true that being over 65 would be a reason to apply?

You are encouraged to apply if you need assistance in any of the categories. Being over 65 or having a health condition that places one at risk may be considered for additional weighting in a scoring matrix, but the same eligibility requirements apply to all.

11. Would we be able to use funds to help with internet services?

This may fall under “other pertinent circumstance” which would require a narrative that describes what that circumstance was. **We have presented the question to our program manager for clarification, but may not receive clear guidance by the time of the deadline to submit your application. You may submit in your application for consideration as a necessary expenditure or one to be considered as a utility, but it may or may not be eligible.**

12. I was working 2 jobs, lost one that is causing this issue. So am I needing employment verification from that job?

Yes, a letter or release from work notification would be verification of job loss.

13. Are all items listed under *Annual household income at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) and for the size of the applicant household* (#3 of Documentation Checklist) required?

Yes, the documentation is used to determine household income and eligibility for funding.

14. Will income reported on a Tax Return disqualify me if a situation has changed since I last filed?

No, proof of current income and supporting documentation will be taken into consideration when determining eligibility.

15. How long does the application approval process take?

Beginning on Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, the review committee will begin reviewing all applications. Time period is yet to be determined by the County, but every effort is being made to expedite payment once eligibility and awards have been determined.

16. Is funding only for past expenditures?

Funding under this program is primarily for past expenditures as this is a reimbursement type grant based on eligible expenditures that have occurred since March 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020 as per the CARES Act. However, we will also consider outstanding balances for rent/mortgages/utilities/childcare for the covered period. Per the Dept. of the Treasury guidance, "...a grant or loan, for example, provided by a recipient using payments from the Fund must be used by the subrecipient only to purchase (or reimburse a purchase of) goods or services for which receipt both is needed within the covered period and occurs within the covered period." For processing clarification, the County (recipient) funds the grant to eligible applicants (sub-recipients), and then will submit a reimbursement request to DFA.

17. Are payments made to vendors (landlord etc.) or individuals?

Rental, mortgage, and childcare assistance payments will be made depending on how the application is submitted given two options - if the application was submitted for request for reimbursement or request for payment. If more information is needed for County Finance to issue payment to a vendor, then we will reach out to the applicant to obtain necessary vendor information. Utility assistance payments will be made to individuals.

18. Are faith-based organizations exempt in some way regarding licensing and childcare?

Faith-based organization would be required to have authority to provide childcare. For example, if they have authorization through the State/CYFD.

19. Would being on disability (and at higher risk for COVID) be a reason to apply for utility assistance if there is no loss of income?

You are encouraged to apply if you need assistance in any of the categories. Being disabled or having a health condition that places one at risk may be considered for additional weighting in a scoring matrix, but the same eligibility requirements apply to all.

20. Would loss of child support due to an ex-spouse's change of employment circumstance related to COVID-19 be considered?

Yes, this would support a loss of income and documentation would be required.