

guidance and policies being released by the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on reimbursement for emergency feeding programs.

Background:

On March 12, 2020 the County Director of Emergency Services proclaimed a Local Emergency as a result of COVID-19. On the same day, the County Health Officer declared a Local Health Emergency due to the imminent and proximate threat to public health from the introduction of COVID-19 in the County. This emergency has impacted residents throughout the County of Santa Barbara with significant unemployment rates and increased food insecurity. Additionally, a number of vulnerable residents, including home-bound seniors, have been unable to safely access sufficient food.

To meet the nutritional needs of impacted populations, the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County responded with emergency food distribution sites and home delivery services for seniors. During an emergency in Santa Barbara County, the Foodbank serves as the primary food resource and operates as the lead relief agency in accordance with the Multi-Agency Disaster Feeding Plan.

Based on recent FEMA policy addressing emergency feeding during COVID-19, the purchase and distribution of food constitutes emergency protective measures necessary to save lives and protect public health and safety. The policy also provides that local governments may enter into formal agreements with private organizations, including private nonprofit (PNP) organizations such as food banks, to purchase and distribute food when necessary as an emergency protective measure in response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. In these cases, federal public assistance funding is provided to the County which is the legally responsible government entity, which then reimburses the private organization for the cost of providing those services under the agreement.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

The Foodbank intends to pursue reimbursement specifically for home delivery services only, which includes brown bag food delivery and prepared meals for home-bound seniors. Approximately 3,325 individuals are currently receiving home delivery services. Foodbank estimates that 64% of these individuals are eligible per FEMA eligibility requirements. The estimated costs for FEMA-eligible home delivery recipients from March through September 2020 is \$421,955.

The Foodbank will submit eligible costs to the County with the appropriate documentation required for FEMA reimbursement processes. The County would be required to pay Foodbank for all eligible costs for which they submit appropriate documentation per this funding agreement, regardless of FEMA reimbursement.

The County plans to pursue FEMA reimbursement for these incurred costs. Assuming the County can recover all emergency feeding costs from FEMA (75% cost share) and California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) is not approved, the County would be responsible for \$105,488 (25% cost share). If CDAA funds are approved, the County's cost-share is reduced to 6.25%. If unable to recover any costs, the County is responsible for the full amount.

Governor Newsom's Stay-at-Home Order is still in place and County residents continue to experience nutritional challenges related to COVID-19. The funding agreement provides for reimbursement for emergency feeding services through September 31, 2020 (6 month period in alignment with guidelines).

In order to meet the ongoing needs of impacted populations, the County may want to consider an extension of this funding agreement at a future date.

Budgeted: This item is not budgeted for. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding is available to cover any costs not reimbursed by FEMA and CDAA.

Attachment

Funding Agreement between the County of Santa Barbara and Foodbank of Santa Barbara County

Authored by:

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