



Web-based Clearinghouse

Policies and Procedures Manual

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EFSP Web-based Clearinghouse System

The following guidelines and standards apply to users of the EFSP Web-based Clearinghouse who are spending EFSP funds.

1) Guidelines and Standards

- A) The National Board mandates that Local Boards establish a system to ensure that no duplication of payment occurs within the categories of rent, mortgage or utility assistance. **Rent, Mortgage or Utility Assistance should not be committed to a client without first being cleared through the EFSP Web-based Clearinghouse.**
- B) **Making a pledge for a client using EFSP funds requires logging on to the EFSP Web-based Clearinghouse to ensure that there is no duplication of services for a client or household.**
- C) **Remember: EFSP is not a poverty-based program.** There are no income restrictions; anyone experiencing an economic emergency is eligible. Assistance should be given after determining that all other resources have been exhausted.
- D) Rent/Mortgage Assistance can be given if all of the following conditions are met:
 - a. Payment is in arrears or due within five calendar days.
 - b. The client is: 1) a resident of the home or apartment and 2) responsible for the rent/mortgage on the home or apartment where the rent/mortgage assistance is to be paid.
 - c. Payment is limited to one month's cost for each individual or family; assistance can be provided a) for a full month's rent/mortgage (principal and interest) all at one time, or b) in separate payments over a period of up to 90 consecutive days so long as the total amount paid does not exceed one month's cost.
 - d. The following payments are not eligible rent/mortgage cost: late fees, deposits, legal fees, down payment for purchase of a home, taxes, insurance, escrow, and condo fees.
 - e. If a client has two mortgages, assistance may only be given on the principal or first mortgage for the client's residence.
 - f. Payments for trailers and lots are eligible and can be paid to a mortgage company or to a private landlord.
 - g. Assistance with one month's rent/mortgage can be provided in addition to eligible utility and food assistance under this program.

- E) Utility Assistance can be given if all of the following conditions are met:
- a. Eligible utility cost include gas, electricity, water sewer services, limited non-metered assistance such as oil, firewood, or coal.
 - b. Payment is in arrears or due within 5 calendar days.
 - c. All other resources have been exhausted;
 - d. Payment is limited to **one month's** cost for each utility for each individual or household.
 - e. The month being paid is:
 - Current amount due
 - Budget amount due
 - or part of the arrearage that is either from the current phase or for continuous service prior to the award phase that remains past due.
 - f. Each utility can be paid only once in each grant phase for any individual or household.
 - g. Payment must guarantee an additional 30 days of service.
 - h. Utility reconnect fees are an eligible cost.
- F) Multiple agencies may not join together to pay a portion of a single utility bill using EFSP funds.
- G) Agency staff should complete the metered verification form for the agency's records; it should not be sent to the vendor.
- H) If the client has quarterly bill which covers more than one month's usage, to determine the eligible amount for assistance, divide the bill into thirds and only pay one third of the bill.
- I) Reconnect fees are an eligible cost.
- J) Late fees, deposits, repayment agreements beyond one month billing and other service charges are NOT eligible for utility assistance.
- K) At least one person at each agency shall be defined as a primary contact and be able to receive e-mail communications regarding the EFSP program.

2) To Access the EFSP Web-based Clearinghouse Main Menu

- A) Through your web browser (such as Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher) access the web site www.stl.unitedway.org and select 'Agency Resources'. Then select 'Reporting'.
- B) Scroll to the EFSP section of the Reporting page and click on 'EFSP Web-based Clearinghouse'.
- C) Enter your username and password and click the 'Login' button to go to the system's main menu. If you have forgotten the information, click on the 'Click here if you have forgotten your user name or password' button. You will be prompted for your e-mail address, and if it matches the one on file for this user, the user will receive an e-mail notifying them of their username and password. If this is unsuccessful, contact United Way staff.
- D) Each individual agency user should have his/her own username and password.
- E) If a user is no longer with the agency, email efs@stl.unitedway.org to have that user's access deleted from the system.

3) Main Menu features and System Modules

- A) The main menu is the place from where, with a click of the mouse, you may enter the system's various functional modules. By clicking on the 'Main Menu' button from any screen you may return to the main menu. The various functional modules may be accessed through the list on the left side of the screen or from the pull down menu categories available across the top of the screen. Functional modules as listed are:
 - Register a EFS Pledge
 - Existing Pledges
 - Manage Clients

4) Entering an EFSP Pledge for a Client

- A) From the Main Menu click on 'Register a EFSP Pledge'
- B) Enter the client's social security number in the appropriate box and hit 'Generate Pledge'. (When typing the social security number, the digits can be entered with **or** without dashes.) If the system finds the client, users may make pledges that **have not already been pledged** at that point. If the client's contact information has changed, click the 'Edit' button.
- C) If the system does not find the social security number entered, the screen will prompt the user to enter an address for the client.
- D) Enter the address number, street name, and zip code (entering the road type - i.e. Street, Avenue, Lane, etc. is optional), in the appropriate box and hit 'Search for Client'. Any potential matches will appear based on address number, street name

and zip code. Scroll the list to determine if the client's address exists in the system. **Remember only one individual or household can receive EFSP assistance during a phase.** You may click 'Pledge History' (to review what pledges have been made for the address during this phase and verify if there is any change to the client information needed) or 'Register a Pledge' to register a pledge that has not already been made for a client.

- E) If the system finds no potential matches after name and address searches, you may click on the 'Enter New Client Information' button that now appears on the screen. Enter all of the requested information. On the 'Enter New Client' page the following options are not mandatory:
- Household size
 - Phone
 - Monthly household income (Annual household income will populate automatically if monthly household income is completed)
 - Employment status
- F) If the address search has determined that the household has already received assistance in one of the funding categories, assistance may only be pledged for a category that has not yet received a pledge.
- G) After entering a new client or editing an existing client's information move on to step H) below. The client information is displayed at the top of the screen. Review for accuracy. If changes are needed click the 'Edit' button on your browser and make any corrections.
- H) Select the category that you want to pay from the five options available:
- Rent/Mortgage
 - Electric
 - Gas (includes pledges for propane assistance)
 - Water
 - Sewer
- I) Click 'Submit'.
- J) Review information for accuracy. Correct if necessary. When the pledge is verified click one of the three options:
- Make a correction to Pledge
 - Print and Confirm Pledge
 - Confirm Pledge and Exit
- K) It is recommended you hit the 'Print and Confirm Pledge' and save the printout for your records. Do not print out a pledge to review unless you confirm it.

5) Managing Pledges and Managing Clients

- A) Click on 'Main Menu' to return to the Main menu. Click on the 'Manage Clients'. You will see a list of all of your agency's clients with a confirmed pledge.
- B) Scroll until you find the pledge you wish to view. Pledges are displayed in the order entered with the most recent ones at the bottom. Or click on the headers to change order to be based on that header.
- C) Click on 'Edit' or 'Pledge History' next to the item you wish to review and/or edit.
- D) All types of pledges may be viewed in the 'Manage Clients' page. If a user has submitted a pledge in error, 'Confirmed' pledges must be edited by United Way staff. To change a pledge that has been confirmed and submitted please contact efs@stl.unitedway.org.

