

HOUSEHOLD ESTABLISHMENT FUNDS (HEF) PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the HEF Program?

The HEF Program provides one-time assistance (up to \$1500) for residents displaced or impacted by Hurricanes Katrina or Rita currently residing in St. Helena, Tangipahoa or Washington parish. Payment assistance can be provided for rental security deposit, rent payments, utility deposits, utility bills, pre-selected bedding or appliances.

2. What are the eligibility requirements?

Those eligible to receive HEF payments are limited to the following:

- Displaced or impacted as a result of Hurricanes Katrina or Rita for citizens whose **pre-storm residence** was within the designated disaster parishes of Acadia, Allen, Assumption, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Iberia, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, Sabine, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Mary, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Vermilion, Vernon or Washington; **AND**
- Establishment of a household or residence currently in St. Helena, Tangipahoa, or Washington parish, **AND**
- Income at or below 300 percent of the 2008 Federal Poverty Level according to the family size and gross income indicated below:

| 2008 Federal Poverty Level Guidelines | | 300 Percent of the 2008 Federal Poverty Level | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---|----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Family Size | Poverty Level | Yearly Income | Monthly Income | Bi-monthly Income | Weekly Income |
| 1 | \$ 10,400 | \$ 31,200 | \$2,600 | \$1,300 | \$ 600.00 |
| 2 | \$ 14,000 | \$ 42,000 | \$3,500 | \$1,750 | \$ 807.69 |
| 3 | \$ 17,600 | \$ 52,800 | \$4,400 | \$2,200 | \$1,015.38 |
| 4 | \$ 21,200 | \$ 63,600 | \$5,300 | \$2,650 | \$1,223.08 |
| 5 | \$ 24,800 | \$ 74,400 | \$6,200 | \$3,100 | \$1,430.77 |
| 6 | \$ 28,400 | \$ 85,200 | \$7,100 | \$3,550 | \$1,638.46 |
| 7 | \$ 32,000 | \$ 96,000 | \$8,000 | \$4,000 | \$1,846.15 |
| 8 | \$ 35,600 | \$106,800 | \$8,900 | \$4,450 | \$2,053.85 |

If Family Size is over 8, add \$3,600 for each additional member to calculate poverty level.

At an appointment, each client must bring proof of their identification, proof of residence and proof of current income as per the directions on their appointment confirmation letter. It is vitally important that you carefully look at that document to see what is needed to confirm eligibility.

3. How do you get an appointment? The **ONLY** way to get an appointment is to call 1-800-333-3104 beginning Monday, March 9, 2009 from 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. daily to be pre-screened until all available appointment slots have been filled for the program.

4. How will households be served?

Once pre-screening eligibility has been determined through the call center, appointments will be made on a first come, first served basis up to the funding limit. Only one HEF payment can be issued for any one household unit. A household unit is composed of at least one adult who is 18 years or older, their spouse, and any minor children under 18 years old.

5. How long is my appointment?

Each appointment is 90 minutes (1 hour and 30 minutes). This gives the client and the case manager ample time to meet with each household unit and provide the needed assistance. It will most likely take all of this time to get the needed information processed for your HEF Program eligibility.

6. What happens after the appointment is made through the call center?

Write the date, time and location of your appointment down. The call center will also notify you about the vital documents that you **must** bring to your appointment and also send you an appointment confirmation letter. The process of obtaining a HEF payment continues with the appointment. Come 10-15 minutes early and prepared with all necessary documentation. Begin collecting all documentation as soon as you know about your appointment date and time.

7. Will I get a reminder call about my appointment day, time, and location?

Yes. All appointments will receive 3 reminder calls (6 day, 3 day and 1 day) before your scheduled appointment. Each reminder call will remind you what to bring to your appointment. All appointments are held at a community site, which provides common access for all households.

8. What happens if I miss my appointment?

If you do not show up for your scheduled appointment and miss it, you will not be rescheduled. Your appointment will be forfeited.

9. If I am pre-screened, does that mean that I will automatically receive a HEF payment?

No. Each household is different and has different needs. Additional supporting documentation in the client's name (and spouse) will be needed for rental assistance, furnishings assistance, or utility assistance. See your appointment confirmation letter for required details.

10. What happens if I do not have all of my documentation at my appointment that proves my eligibility?

You will not be able to meet with a case manager for a HEF payment.

11. What role does Gulf Coast Professional Consultants, LLC play in the HEF Program?

They are a service provider who the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps contracted with to 1) verify eligibility of pre-screened households, 2) meet with a client's household in-person and 3) issue HEF payments on behalf of those who qualify. The service provider will also coordinate any and all information on behalf of the eligible household with utility assistance, rental assistance, or furnishings assistance.

12. Can I get help with a mortgage payment?

No. Only rental payments and rental deposit payments qualify.

13. Do I have to pay the HEF payment or money back?

Only in the case of fraud will someone pay money back. If you legally qualify and benefit from a HEF payment, you do not have to pay it back. All money and furnishings payments are paid directly to a third party such as the utility company or furnishing vendor. Up to \$1500 is paid on the eligible client's behalf. There is no cash or money given directly to the eligible client or client's household.

14. Why do all of the bills, lease and notarized documents have to be in the applicant's name? *This is an extremely important point to know. Utility or rental payments must have the client's name (or spouse's name) on it. Bills in minor children's names will NOT be paid. If a client would like to receive services, the bills must be payable on the client's (or spouse's) behalf for this program.*

15. What if my spouse's name is on the lease and I am not listed on the lease and I am the one applying? *You have not proven your residency with property information. See your appointment confirmation letter for specific details required for the client..*

16. How many case managers will be working with or processing clients per day at each site?

There will be at least 2 case managers working at each community site. Each case manager will process about 5 clients per day who have made appointments through the call center. Case managers will only be able to serve clients from their pre-screened appointment calendar. This is not a walk up service for clients to receive benefits.

17. Family income guidelines start at one person. Does this program help elderly, single, or student households?

Yes. The elderly, single, or student households who meet the eligibility criteria can receive HEF payments.

18. What will I receive in the mail or be reminded to bring by phone to my appointment?

- ◆ *Information stating the location, time, and date of your appointment*
- ◆ *Eligibility requirements that must be met and verifying documents to bring*
- ◆ *Phone number to call for directions or questions*
- ◆ *Notification that the failure to provide the required supporting documentation will result in your inability to receive benefits*

19. What if I get a call and I tell the operator I can't make the appointment?

Your appointment will be canceled and not rescheduled. The extra available appointment will be added to the end of the calendar for another client to be served who has been prescreened during the week of March 9, 2009.

20. Is the interview a one-time meeting with the case manager or will there be return appointments made for the collection of receipts, gathering of more information, etc.? *There will be one appointment only. All information must be gathered during that one-time appointment for services. No appointment will be re-scheduled for the client to present missing items.*

21. Can someone call on behalf of someone else?

Yes. The only stipulation is that the client receiving the benefit must qualify and appear at the appointment. If the client is unable to attend the appointment, a legal representative must present their "power of attorney" to speak, act and engage on behalf of the client. All documentation and receipt of services must still be in the client's name for services to be received.

22. Can one child be listed under two different head of households?

Yes. If a child is listed under both a mother and father in two different households, the child can be included as a part of each household for eligibility requirements. This allows the child to benefit from the services and provisions under each of their parent's households.

23. Can someone who cancels his or her appointment get another one in an open slot automatically? *No. The process for getting an appointment is only through the call center. If you miss, cancel, or appear too late to be processed, you will not receive these benefits.*

24. How will case managers know who has appointments?

The call center will provide a shared calendar for all case managers and the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps to see, print and update. Each case manager will denote the status of all appointments kept that were eligible, appointments kept that were ineligible, no show appointments and canceled appointments.

25. How many households will received HEF payments?

About 1,140 households will receive HEF payments starting in mid March 2009.

26. What services or things will be provided by the HEF Program?

- a. *Rental deposit (new address in the 3 eligible parishes)*
- b. *Rental payment (past due or current bill ; pre-storm address or current address in one of the 3 eligible parishes)*
- c. *Utility deposit (gas, water, electric; new address)*
- d. *Utility payment (gas, water, electric; current or pre-storm address)*
- e. *Bedding: Mattress set and frame (King, Queen, Full, Twin) or twin bunk w/mattresses*
- f. *Appliances (standard sizes): Refrigerator (18 cu. ft.), Washer, Dryer (gas or electric) or Stove (30" gas or 30" electric).*

27. If a utility bill includes trash pickup, is that allowable?

Yes. If the water bill, electricity bill or sewerage bill includes trash as a part of the total bill, it will be paid. If the trash bill is a separate bill, it will not be paid or deemed eligible for payment separately.

28. Can a household receive more than one utility assistance payment?

Yes. As long as the physical information they provide during their appointment meets the criteria (such as being in their name) for their current or past residence and it does not exceed the \$1,500 amount. A recent printout (within the last 30 days) of each bill is required.

29. When will I know what I will receive from the HEF Program?

During your appointment with a case manager, you will know what you are eligible to receive and the timeframe for receipt of services. Official approval occurs within 2 weeks of your appointment. During this time if you are deemed ineligible for any service for any reason, you will receive notification in writing by mail (about 2 weeks from the date of your appointment). Otherwise, clients should anticipate receiving all requested and approved benefits beginning 2 weeks after their appointment, but no more than 30 days after their appointment.

30. What establishes residency?

Tax document, mortgage statement, legal lease, or notarized documents in applicant's name are all ways for clients to prove residency. See additional details contained within your appointment confirmation letter.

31. If an applicant is not reached when the call center makes the follow-up calls, will the call center leave a voicemail?

Yes. A voicemail will be left with information about the appointment and the information to bring. Also note that the information will be mailed to you after the initial prescreening phone call. Look for it in the mail.

32. Does a person have to have a job?

Eligible clients must work a minimum of 24 hours per week, or receive income from disability, pension or social security. All eligible households must have income. Those who do not have any income from employment (at least 24 hours a week), disability, pension or social security from an adult in the household are not eligible for this program.

33. What happens if a person arrives late to their appointment?

Clients arriving late for their appointment are NOT guaranteed service. Each appointment typically uses the entire 1 hour and 30 minutes for processing.