

# Board of County Commissioners

## Leon County, Florida

### Policy No. 20-4

Title: Human Services Emergency Assistance Programs

Date Adopted: July 14, 2020

Effective Date: July 14, 2020

Reference: None

Policy Superseded: None

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It shall be the policy of the Board of County Commissioners of Leon County, Florida, that a policy entitled “Human Services Emergency Assistance Programs” to administer Leon County’s Human Services Emergency Assistance Programs; the Direct Emergency Assistance Program and the Veteran Emergency Assistance Program; is hereby adopted, to wit:

#### **I. Establishment, Purpose, and Guidelines**

##### **A. Direct Emergency Assistance Program**

The Direct Emergency Assistance Program (DEAP) is established to provide immediate financial assistance to eligible Leon County residents for basic necessities including housing and utilities to prevent homelessness and maintain safe and sanitary housing conditions.

The County Administrator shall establish guidelines for the administration of DEAP in accordance with this Policy. The guidelines may be amended by the County Administrator.

##### **B. Veteran Emergency Assistance Program**

The Veteran Emergency Assistance Program (VEAP) is established to provide immediate financial assistance for basic necessities including housing, utilities, and transportation to eligible Leon County residents that are veterans and have served a minimum of ninety (90) days in the United States military.

The County Administrator shall establish guidelines for the administration of VEAP in accordance with this Policy. The guidelines may be amended by the County Administrator.

## II. Form of Assistance and Maximum Level of Assistance

- A. DEAP shall provide financial assistance for the following forms of payments:
  - 1. Rent
  - 2. Mortgage
  - 3. Utility
  - 4. Home Fuel
  
- B. VEAP shall provide financial assistance for the following forms of payments:
  - 1. Rent
  - 2. Mortgage
  - 3. Utility
  - 4. Home Fuel
  - 5. Temporary Shelter
  - 6. Transportation
  
- C. All other uses of DEAP and VEAP funding for assistance are prohibited.
  
- D. The maximum of level of assistance for housing (rent or mortgage) shall be limited to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Fair Market Rent for Leon County based on the number of bedrooms within the home. An applicant will be required to demonstrate the ability to make any payments above the HUD Fair Market Rent required to mitigate eviction or foreclosure.
  
- E. The maximum of level of assistance for utility or home fuel shall be limited to the amount required to avoid disruption of services for the subsequent 30 days.
  
- F. The VEAP guidelines shall establish the maximum of level of assistance for Temporary Shelter and Transportation based on cost-of-living increases reported by the federal government or by sound market data.

## III. Eligibility

- A. Applicants must reside in Leon County at the time of application to be eligible for DEAP or VEAP. Additionally, VEAP applicants must be veterans and have served a minimum of ninety (90) days in the United States military.
  
- B. Applicants must have good likelihood of future independence and must demonstrate that their situation will improve by the next payment date for housing and/or utility.
  
- C. Applicants and his/her household must be in “need” of emergency assistance. Need is demonstrated and documented when the household’s income for the most recent 30-day period is less than the household’s Basic Necessity Expenditures for the most recent 30-day period.

1. For determining eligibility, income shall include the following:
    - a. Wages
    - b. Commissions
    - c. Farm earnings
    - d. Self-employment
    - e. Retirement income/pension/401K
    - f. Social Security
    - g. Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability
    - h. Veteran's administration benefits
    - i. Unemployment compensation
    - j. Child support or alimony
    - k. Vocational rehabilitation benefits
    - l. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
    - m. Assistance received from family and friends
  2. For determining eligibility Basic Necessity Expenditures shall include the following:
    - a. Housing
    - b. Utility/Fuel
    - c. Food
    - d. Childcare
    - e. Transportation
    - f. Telephone
    - g. Internet service
    - h. Emergency expenditures (unexpected documented circumstances that impact finances such as fire, flood, theft, or a medical emergency)
  3. With the exception for emergency expenditures, the basic necessity expenditures shall be calculated up to the maximum market level information reported by the federal government or by sound market data.
  4. The maximum market information for the basic necessity expenditures shall be reviewed annually to adjust for cost-of-living increases reported by the federal government or by sound market data and amended upon approval of the County Administrator, or designee.
- D. Applicants and any adult members of his/her household must be employed and work at least 30 hours a week OR be unemployed and actively seeking full-time work (at least 30 hours a week) unless they meet one or more of the following exceptions:
1. An individual who is 62 years old or older.
  2. An individual who is under the age of 18 years old. However, an individual between the ages of 16 and 17 years old who is not enrolled in high school or

an institution of higher education such as college or a technical school, is considered an adult and must work at least 30 hours a week unless he/she meets one of the other exceptions presented in this section.

3. An individual who is 18 years or older and currently enrolled full-time in an institution of higher learning; full-time means at least 12 credit hours. However, at least one adult in the household must work at least 30 hours a week.
  4. An individual who is unable to work. (*Verification from a physician or documentation from the U.S. Social Security Administration is required.*)
  5. An individual who is needed in the home to care for a disabled adult or child. (*Verification from a physician is required.*)
  6. An individual who is employed but is currently not working or working fewer hours due to inclement weather, furlough or downsizing. (*Verification from employer is required.*)
  7. An individual who has applied for or is receiving unemployment compensation.
  8. An individual (one adult per household) who is needed in the home to care for an infant six (6) months old or younger.
- E. Applicants and his/her household shall be limited for assistance to one time every twelve (12) months and no more than three (3) times over the life time of the DEAP or VEAP programs.

#### **IV. Funding**

The Board of County Commissioners shall establish the annual budget for DEAP and VEAP, respectively. The County Administrator is authorized to realign funding between DEAP and VEAP to maximize assistance to Leon County residents and veterans.

#### **V. Program Administration**

The DEAP and VEAP programs shall be administered by the Office of Human Services and Community Partnerships. However, the County may contract with one or more local organizations to administer any or all portions of one or both programs.