

Social Services Emergency Disaster Relief Grant

In 2009, Congress enacted the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act that appropriated \$600.0 million of additional funds to the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Program for states affected by hurricanes, floods, and other natural disasters that occurred in 2008. The State of Iowa was awarded \$11.2 million under this legislation due to Presidential Declarations #1763 and #1705. The funds are administered through the Department of Human Services (DHS) as the lead State agency for the SSBG funds. However, the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) have received allocations for qualifying expenditures. The Social Services Emergency Disaster Relief Grant is limited to the period of October 1, 2008, through September 30, 2010. The \$11.2 million was distributed as follows: \$5.0 million to DHS; \$4.6 million to DPH; and \$1.6 million to IDA. Details regarding use of the funds by each of these departments are summarized below.

Department of Human Services

The DHS received an allocation of \$5.0 million of the Grant funds. The DHS implemented the Ticket to Hope Program with \$3.3 million of this allocation that includes administrative costs for the Program. The Ticket to Hope Program will provide mental health evaluation and treatment services to individuals and families directly affected by the weather-related disasters of 2008. Coverage for prescription medications is not included in the services provided. People that utilize the services may receive up to eight authorized 45- to 50-minute psychotherapy sessions with an approved mental health provider.

Entry into the Program is through the Iowa Concern Hotline. Contact through the Hotline initiates determination of eligibility, authorization of services, and submission of claims to the DHS for payment. The services are provided at no cost to the person receiving the counseling services. The DHS estimates the Program will provide direct services to over 4,000 Iowans. The Ticket to Hope Program is scheduled to end by June 30, 2010, or when the funds are expended, whichever comes first.

Other DHS Emergency Disaster Relief Grant budgeted expenditures include:

- \$150,000 for behavioral response trainings to enhance disaster-related skills of mental health professionals and community members.
- \$123,000 to expand and continue utilizing the volunteer Behavioral Health Response Teams that provide mental health services to staff that continue to work with disaster survivors.
- \$354,000 to create a separate program to cover clients of the Ticket to Hope Program that may be suffering from somatic and/or psychological distress that will require psychopharmacological intervention to restore adequate daily functioning. The DHS estimates that 625 people could qualify for this assistance.
- \$1.0 million for community-based mental health services for persons that are otherwise not qualified for mental health services. These funds are made available through a reimbursement process to the presidentially declared disaster counties. The funds will pay for a wide range of mental health-related services including information and coordination, personal and environmental support, outpatient treatment, residential, and hospital and commitment related services.

Department of Public Health

The DPH will spend the majority of their \$4.6 million allocation on substance abuse treatment and prevention services including:

- \$700,000 to implement a single statewide substance abuse prevention campaign related to weather disasters and ongoing stress. The Department funded media placements statewide and expanded existing contracts with prevention partners across the State for local implementation of the statewide prevention campaign.

More Information

DHS Ticket to Hope Program eligibility (Iowa Concern Hotline) 1-800-447-1985

Department of Public Health disaster-related substance abuse information:
http://www.idph.state.ia.us/bh/substance_abuse_disaster_relief.asp

Iowa Department on Aging: <http://www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs/resources/floodsof2008.html>

LSA Staff Contact: Deborah Helsen (515-281-6764) deborah.helsen@legis.state.ia.us

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- \$650,000 to implement focused outreach to past and potential substance abuse clients. The Department has expanded existing contracts with local substance abuse treatment programs to conduct focused outreach and follow-up with clients that may have dropped out of treatment during the weather disaster or relapsed since the disaster.
- \$1.8 million to implement enhanced “disaster-informed” services to substance abuse clients and their families responding to the prevention campaign and focused outreach. The Department has expanded existing contracts with local substance abuse treatment programs to train staff on disaster impact issues and potential delayed behavioral effects, including child neglect or abuse, domestic violence, or depression, in addition to substance abuse. Program staff will provide case management, education and counseling services for children, and services for co-occurring mental health and substance abuse symptoms.

Other DPH Emergency Disaster Relief Grant budgeted expenditures include:

- \$150,000 for providing additional support to family support home visiting services due to increased caseloads related to weather-related disasters. Family support home visiting provides for early identification or intervention to assist families in connecting to their local community resources and promotion of parental education to foster a nurturing connection between parent and child.
- \$250,000 to expand and enhance chronic disease screening and assessments and to implement health education and self-management programs.
- \$1.1 million to provide additional resources to increased caseloads for home and community-based services like public health nursing, home care and supportive services, and case management.

Department on Aging

The IDA has received an allocation of \$1.6 million and will spend approximately \$1.3 million of the funding on home-based support services such as respite care, chore maintenance, home repair, homemaker, and other allowable and needed services.

Other IDA Emergency Disaster Relief Grant budgeted expenditures include:

- \$174,000 for case management and counseling services for older adults residing in impacted areas of the State. The goal is to link older adults with the array of service supports offered by FEMA and other unmet needs services.
- \$87,000 for the Area Agencies on Aging to expand outreach efforts and referral services for FEMA applicants age 60 and older and their caregivers through direct mail, telephone, and door-to-door outreach efforts.
- \$56,000 to enable on-going home delivered meal services to continue serving individuals impacted by the disasters that need such services.
- \$38,000 to enable on-going congregate meal services and related nutrition counseling to continue serving individuals impacted by the disasters that need such services.
- \$2,000 for legal assistance for individuals impacted by the disaster. Legal matters have included but are not limited to mortgage foreclosure, financial abuse, buy-outs, home repair and modification scams, and financial exploitation.

Reporting Requirements

The following reporting requirements are included in the award term and conditions. As the Grantee on behalf of the State of Iowa, the Iowa Department of Human Services:

- Is required to submit an amendment to the FY 2009 pre-expenditure report regarding the use of the SSBG supplemental funds. The deadline for submission of the amendment is within 30 days of receiving funds. The DHS met this requirement by submitting the Intended Use Plan on February 17, 2009.
- Is required to submit a post-expenditure report to report on expenditures for and recipients of services for SSBG Supplemental Funds. The report is due six months after the end of the reporting period.
- Should track SSBG Supplemental Funds Expenditures separately from the annual SSBG allotments.
- Is required to submit annual financial status reports, SF-269A (Short Form), for this program. The first report is due 90 days after the end of the first year (i.e., December 30, 2009). Final reports are due December 30, 2010.

In order to meet the federal reporting requirements, DHS, DPH, and IDA are regularly tracking performance and expenditure data. In order to assure sufficient documentation to meet the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services' reporting requirements, no more than weekly but no less than quarterly, each department completes expenditure documentation that includes the amount of award funds spent by SSBG Service Category and the number of people served by SSBG Service Category by the following age groups: children, ages 0 to 17; adults, ages 18 and younger; and older adults, ages 60 and over. Also, the Rebuild Iowa Office tracks the status and use of the SSBG Supplemental Disaster funds.