

Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program

Description: The Utilities category is intended to allow agencies to pay a one-month billed amount of a metered (electric, gas, water) or non-metered (propane, firewood, coal) utility bill for qualifying clients. Each household may receive this assistance only once per spending period.

This Quick Reference Guide lists information on metered payments only; see *Utilities: Non-Metered Bills* for information on non-metered utility bill payments. This Quick Reference Guide is provided to assist in the understanding of allowable costs and documentation requirements at a glance; it is not a substitute for the *EFSP Responsibilities and Requirements Manual (EFSP Manual)*. For more complete information on this category, please reference the *EFSP Manual*.

Metered bills (electric, gas, water)

Eligible items:

- Past due utility bills or
- Current utility bill

When paying on current bill, LROs can pay either the actual usage amount reflected on the bill, or the current “budget” amount.

NOTE: Agencies may include the cost of “reconnection” fees in the payment.

Ineligible items:

- Payments made on agency’s own utility bills
- Payment for metered utilities exceeding a single one-month billed amount
- Any current utility payment dated more than 5 calendar days prior to the utility due date
- Payment on closed accounts
- Payments on TV cable, satellite, internet, and phone bills
- Payments for any type of fuel for automobiles
- Late fees, deposits or any other fees
- Any payments not made directly to the vendor

When paying on past due metered bills:

- If you are paying on a cut-off/shut-off notice OR paying on a past due balance listed on a current bill, the agency must verify the 1-month billed amount of the total outstanding at the time of payment. The verification must be with the vendor, and must list the following:
 - The month being covered (or the 30 day period being covered)
 - The amount billed for that month of actual usage only
 - The date that the payment was due that month
 - The total amount outstanding at the time of payment
- All of the amount paid by the LRO must be outstanding at the time of payment (the date the payment is made).

It is strongly recommended that the agency attach a billing and payment history from the utility company.

NOTE: Some utility bills cover more than one month of usage. Agencies must only pay a verified one-month billed portion. Do not use averaging. Agencies are strongly urged to use the Metered Utility Verification Form in the *EFSP Manual* to confirm the 1-month billed amounts of past due balances.

When paying on current metered bills:

- All of the amount paid by the LRO must be outstanding at the time of payment (the date the check is written).
- The payment cannot be made more than 10 calendar days prior to the utility due date.

Documentation Required:

For past due bills: Attach the bill or cut-off/shut-off notice, a Metered Utility Verification Form or billing and payment history from the vendor. Also attach proof of payment: copy of canceled checks (front and back), or copy of uncanceled fronts of checks and bank statement. Check images included in bank statements are accepted. Debit card or electronic payments require bank statement that identifies the vendor by name. Credit card payments require canceled check payable to the credit card company. Debit and credit cards must be in agency’s name. Payment receipts and check stubs are not sufficient.

For current bills: Attach the current bill (or billing and payment history), and proof of payment.

SPECIAL NOTE: Agencies may pay up to \$100.00 on any past due balance and not be required to present any verification. However, the documentation must show that all of the payment amount was outstanding at the time of payment.