

Nicollet County CARES Act Crisis Assistance

Title: Nicollet County CARES Act Crisis Assistance

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to specify how Nicollet County Health and Human Services will use funds available through the CARES Act to help residents in crisis situations due to the impact of COVID-19.

Effective: 08/15/2020-11/15/2020 or until funds are depleted, whichever comes first.

CARES Crisis Assistance will be used to meet the emergency needs of eligible individuals, married couples or families who are residents of Nicollet County. The total funds are limited to the amount authorized by the Nicollet County Board of Commissioners for the emergency programs funded through the CARES Act.

The applicants must be in an emergency situation due to the impact of COVID-19.

I. ELIGIBILITY FACTORS.

To be eligible, applicant must apply as a household and must meet all of the following conditions:

- At least one member of the assistance unit must be a Nicollet County resident
- At least one member of the assistance unit must meet citizenship and/or immigration requirements per the Nicollet County EA policy
- The assistance unit's gross income must be at or below 275% federal poverty guidelines for the months assistance is requested
- CARES Act funds are not available for a crisis resulting from fraud or misrepresentation on the part of any assistance unit member.
- The emergency is directly related to COVID-19
- Assistance units must apply through the Nicollet County Emergency Assistance (EA) program to be eligible for CARES Act funding

II. ITEMS ALLOWABLE FOR PAYMENT

Housing:

- Rental Assistance- past due monthly rent, late fees, court fees
- Homelessness Assistance- application fees, first month rent, damage deposit, last month rent (subject to landlord requirements to obtain housing) up to the maximum assistance amount
- Mortgage Assistance: past due mortgage payments, late fees
 - Family must own and occupy the home
- Contract for Deed: past due payments, late fees
 - Family must be named in the contract and occupy the home

Appliances:

- Repair or replacement of air conditioner or furnace
 - CARES Act funds will be used for the most cost effective solution
 - Two estimates are required by a licensed repairman
 - Vendor must be willing to accept payment from Nicollet County

Utilities:

- Electricity
- Gas
- Water/Sewer
- Propane- including delivery, hook-up and fill
- Wood
- Fuel Oil- including delivery, hook-up and fill
 - Vendor must be willing to accept payment from Nicollet County

Transportation:

- Vehicle repairs
- Past due vehicle payments
- Vehicle registration
- Two months of vehicle insurance
- Costs associated with obtaining a driver's license, excluding fines or penalties
 - Must have valid driver's license and own or lease the vehicle to be insured
 - Two estimates are required by a licensed mechanic
 - Vendor must be willing to accept payment from Nicollet County

Funeral Expenses

- Funeral expenses, including minimum casket, minimum grave liner, minimum urn and embalming for immediate family member(s) as defined in the Nicollet County Handbook Policy
- Applicant must be the same person who is signing Cost of Goods for funeral home
- Assistance units must apply through the Nicollet County Burial program to be eligible for CARES Act crisis funding
 - Vendor must be willing to accept payment from Nicollet County

Expenses for items other than basic needs listed above may be eligible for payment. Applications will be reviewed on a case by case basis, must be deemed essential and directly related to COVID-19. Fund distribution will require supervisory approval.

III. DETERMINING THE AMOUNT OF NICOLLET COUNTY CRISIS ASSISTANCE PAYMENT**Maximum County Payment:**

- Payment cannot exceed \$4,000 per household

IV. VENDORS ALLOWED TO RECEIVE PAYMENT

Bill/Eviction/Disconnect notice must be in the name of an assistance unit member:

- Mortgage Assistance

- All Mortgage Companies will be considered for payment
- Rental Assistance and Contract for Deed
 - Eviction notices written by parties other than bona fide property managers will not be considered sufficient proof that a housing crisis exists
 - Eviction notices from family members will not be considered, unless they are an actual landlord with a licensed rental property or there is a safety concern
- Utility Disconnects
 - All utility companies and local governments will be considered for payment
- Moving out of a parent's home will not be considered for payment, unless there is a COVID-19 related health and safety concern
- Licensed mechanics, repairmen, funeral directors and other vendors must be willing to accept payment from Nicollet County

V. PROCESSING COUNTY CRISIS APPLICATIONS PAYMENT & AVAILABILITY

Combined Application Form (CAF) or County Burial Application (if applicable) will be required

The following must be verified:

- Eviction, foreclosure, disconnect status, appliance repair estimates - including amount needed to resolve, vehicle repair estimates,
- Proof of income during the time of crisis
- Proof of loss or reduction of income directly related to COVID-19
- Other proof(s) as requested to determine eligibility

The assistance unit will be notified upon approval or denial of application

Payments made via CARES Act funds must be issued through the Nicollet County Finance Department

Availability of funds will be the sole determination and discretion of Nicollet County

All CARES Act Funds must have supervisory or designee approval prior to issuance