

Section by Section
The Emergency Family Stabilization Act:
Serving Homeless Children, Youth and Families in Light of COVID-19

Section 1. Short Title: the Emergency Family Stabilization Act

Section 2. Definitions:

This section defines key terms to ensure that they align with the definitions of homelessness used by public schools and programs funded through the Administration for Children and Families, including Head Start and Runaway and Homeless Youth Program, and sets out the benchmarks for the specific entities that would be eligible for this emergency funding. It clearly defines an Indian Tribe and Tribal Organization using the correct definition under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, as well as a Native Hawaiian organization as defined the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 17 U.S.C. 7517).

It defines a Family Stabilization Agency as:

- A current ACF grant or subgrant recipient;
- An Indian Tribe or Tribal organization;
- A Native Hawaiian organization;
- A local educational agency; or
- A local public, private, or Tribal nonprofit agency or organization (including community-based and faith-based organizations), with expertise and demonstrated experience providing direct services to 1 or more of the following populations:
 - Children experiencing homelessness, including children under age 6.
 - Unaccompanied homeless youth under the age of 18.
 - Unaccompanied homeless youth between the ages of 18 and 25.
 - Pregnant women, and pregnant or parenting youth, experiencing homelessness.
 - Families experiencing homelessness.
 - Survivors of dating violence, domestic violence, family violence, or trafficking.

Section 3. Grants to Family Stabilization Entities: This section establishes that the Secretary will award the majority of funding (80 percent) to current ACF grantees, but also award a smaller portion of the funds (20 percent) to new grantees. The Secretary will have 45 days from the date of enactment to discharge the funds to existing grantees and 130 days to discharge the funds to new grantees. This section discusses providing accessibility for the dissemination of applications and reserves not less than 1 percent of the funds for administrative purposes which will allow ACF at HHS to administer the program. This section describes the application requirements that must be submitted to the Secretary. The Secretary is directed to award grants on the basis of need in the area served by each applicant, the quality of each application, and ensuring distribution and prioritization as specified.

This section requires the Secretary to ensure that the majority of awards are distributed to rural areas. The “rural” definition is used in various pieces of legislation in the jurisdiction of Energy and Natural Resources (ENR), which specifies communities less than 50,000 according to the U.S. Census, and tends to be the definition used in ENR legislation.

In order to ensure flexibility for tribes and tribal organizations, this section allows the Secretary to waive any application and quality requirements for those organizations. There is a provision on the priority of

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awards, to once again ensure those primarily serving youth, children and families

receive this emergency funding. The following allowable uses are listed as authorized grant activities:

- Health and safety needs, including PPE, food, hygiene supplies, and mental health services
- Housing-related needs, such as eviction prevention, utility payments, motel stays, and housing placement assistance
- Transportation assistance
- Emergency child care
- Education, training, and employment-related needs
- The particular needs of pregnant women and children birth to age five (including prenatal care, age-appropriate food and early learning materials)
- Staffing for outreach, case management, trafficking prevention, and housing navigation
- Assistance in accessing Economic Stimulus Payments, unemployment compensation, and other benefits provided by federal, state and local governments
- The particular needs of unaccompanied homeless youth and young families, such as trauma-informed and positive youth development services and strength-based family interventions

Section 4. Authorization of Appropriations: There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act \$800,000,000.