

EFFECTIVE October 1, 2008

- SUBJECTS**
1. Application procedures.
 2. SER policy exceptions.
 3. Fair market rent.
 4. Housing affordability.
 5. Budget procedures.
 6. Energy services.
 7. Relocation services.
 8. Homeownership services.
 9. Burial payment increase.
 10. SER case record.
 11. DHS-1514, Application for State Emergency Relief.

1) Application Procedures

ERM 103

The DHS-1419, Decision Notice, is used to inform all State Emergency Relief (SER) applicants of the decision made on their application. Clarification is added to indicate that an SER payment must not be made until the client has verified that their income or asset copayment, shortfall, prorated amount and contribution have been paid or will be paid by another agency. The prorated amount is determined only if there is an undocumented alien in the SER group.

In addition, clarification is added that for energy services, any additional payments made by another agency that exceed the amount needed to resolve the emergency should not reduce the SER payment amount listed on the DHS-1419. This would occur if the client has a balance on their bill that is not subject to shutoff. Many agencies will pay the non-emergency amount in order to reduce the account balance to zero, thus avoiding an emergency in the near future.

Reason: Policy clarification.

2) SER Policy Exceptions

ERM 104 - new item

Requests for exceptions to SER policy must be submitted by the local DHS office through Bridges or by mail, email or fax. SER exception policy is added to the State Emergency Relief Manual in a new item: ERM 104, Exceptions to Official SER Policy.

Local offices are reminded that a request for exception must include:

- Case information.
- Specific information about the emergency.
- The reason for the exception.
- The total cost.

Note: Exception requests do not extend the 10-day standard of promptness.

SER exception policy is removed from BEM/PEM 100, Introduction and a link added to the new item.

Reason: Policy consolidation and information that exceptions are handled through Bridges.

3) Fair Market Rent ERM 201

Certain members may be excluded from the SER group. One of those members may be the SER group’s landlord, provided the group pays fair market rent to live in the home. Information about where to locate fair market rates for rent is added.

See Fair Market Rents by County in the current Information Packet (DHS Publication 790) online at: www.michigan.gov/dhs-publications in the Other category.

**4) Housing
Affordability**

ERM 207

An exception is added for affordability requirements for a person/family who receives a voucher from one of the following:

- Homeless Assistance Recovery Program (HARP).
- Transitional Supportive Housing Leasing Assistance Program (TSHLAP).
- Transition in Place Leasing Assistance Program (TIPLAP).
- Rapid Re-Housing Leasing Assistance.
- Temporary Basic Rental Assistance (TBRA) funded by MSHDA.

These clients should not be denied SER for affordability reasons because they do not have the income for rent. These programs pay Fair Market Rent (FMR) with the client paying 30% of their income, only the 30% should be counted as their obligation. Also, if the person does not have any income or 30% is too high, exceptions can and are granted by the MSHDA agents to waive the 30% contribution fee.

Reason: Homelessness initiative.

**5) Budget
Procedures**

ERM 208

The department’s portion of the cost of service cannot be authorized until verification has been received indicating all income and asset copayments, shortfalls, prorated amounts and contributions have been paid by the client or another agency. The verification must be received by the local office within the 30-day eligibility period.

Reason: Policy clarification.

6) Energy Services ERM 301

Home Heating Credits are no longer considered when determining the required payment amount. Home Heating Credits that are submitted to the group's energy provider and applied to the group's account can still be used to meet the group's required payment.

Required payment policy is reorganized for clarity.

Reason: Policy simplification.

7) Relocation Services**ERM 303**

Eligibility requirements for relocation services are expanded. The homeless definition now includes:

- Persons who meet HUD's definition of homeless and/or are living in a HUD-approved transitional facility. HUD's definition of homeless includes a person/family who receives a voucher from one of the following:
 - Homeless Assistance Recovery Program (HARP).
 - Transitional Supportive Housing Leasing Assistance Program (TSHLAP).
 - Transition in Place Leasing Assistance Program (TIPLAP).
 - Rapid Re-Housing Leasing Assistance.
 - Temporary Basic Rental Assistance (TBRA) funded by MSHDA.

A person/family eligible for one of the above vouchers may be living with others temporarily, may no longer be in a shelter or may be in housing with the grant paying their rent. These are only temporary programs until a permanent housing voucher becomes available or the group is able to pay their own rent, whichever comes before 24 months.

- Persons exiting jail, prison, a juvenile facility, a hospital, a medical setting, foster care, a substance abuse facility or a mental health treatment setting with no plan or resources for housing and no housing to return to.

Reason: Homelessness initiative.

8) Homeownership Services ERM 304

Homeownership services include payments to prevent repossession for failure to meet an installment loan payment for a mobile home.

Reason: Homelessness prevention.

**9) Burial Payment
Increase**

ERM 306

Burial rates for fiscal year 2009 are increased. The new maximum payment is \$909. The new rates are listed in the SER Maximum Payments for Burial Service table.

Reason: House Bill 5814.

**10) SER Case
Record**

ERM 405 - new item

A new manual item, ERM 405, has been created for SER case record information. Policy regarding SER case information has been removed from PAM/BAM and added to the SER manual. The intent is to consolidate SER policy, not to require separate case records for SER. SER case information must remain in the case record with other program information.

Reason: Policy consolidation.

11) DHS-1514

The DHS-1514, State Emergency Relief Application, is revised (rev. 7/08). Previous editions are obsolete. Non-Bridges counties may continue to use the previous version of the SER application until the supply is exhausted. The form is increased in length; local offices must print the form in duplex (front and back).

Reason: Bridges requirements for data collection.