

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Applicants may file a State Emergency Relief (SER) application in any county in Michigan. An application may also be submitted electronically through the MIBridges. An application submitted through MIBridges for an SER covered service is considered a complete application. No additional applications are required.

Applications may be transferred between counties if it is in the best interest of the applicant. Both counties must mutually agree to the transfer.

Any person has the right to apply for SER. Authorized representatives may apply on behalf of a person who is deceased, physically or mentally disabled, or a minor. Obtain written permission from all other applicants designating an authorized representative outside the SER group.

APPLICATION FORMS

DHS-1514, Application for State Emergency Relief

The application for SER is the DHS-1514, Application for State Emergency Relief. All SER applicants must complete this form unless they apply online through MIBridges for an SER covered service. Incomplete applications may be filed, but must be completed before authorizing SER. Active clients may submit this form at a local MDHHS office, or by mail or fax. Emailed and scanned applications are not acceptable.

Burial Applications

An application for burial services must be made no later than 10 business days after the burial, cremation or donation takes place. Any person who has the legal right to claim the body may be the authorized representative; see ERM 306, Burials

APPLICATION REGISTRATION

Applications must be registered within one day of receipt. Online applications will be sent electronically to a registration inbox for proper assignment.

APPLICATION DATE

Requests for SER become an application on the day the signed DHS-1514 is received in a local office. For electronic applications submitted through MIBridges, the application date is determined based on the time and date of submission. Any application submitted after 5:00 pm or on a non-business day will have an application date of the next business day.

The application date is the first day of the 30-day SER eligibility period. If the application is approved, the 30-day eligibility period does not change regardless of how many service requests the client may make during that period. If the application is denied and the client reapplies, a new 30-day period will start with that new application date.

If additional SER services are requested during the approved 30-day eligibility period, a new application is not needed and the application date cannot be changed. Every additional request made during the approved 30-day eligibility period is entered into Bridges as an additional SER service request and is subject to the original 30-day eligibility period.

Example: Client applies for assistance with an electric shut-off on 6/1 and is approved. This establishes a 30-day SER eligibility period of 6/1-6/30. On 6/25, the client requests an additional SER service for a natural gas shut-off. The client has not made the required payments to the natural gas provider and has a shortfall. Because the client has requested the additional service during the 6/1-6/30 eligibility period, this request is subject to that period. The client only has until 6/30 to provide proof of the shortfall payment for the 6/25 request.

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Budget

Complete an SER budget in Bridges for each request/application; see ERM 208 for budget procedures. Bridges calculates payment maximums, required payments, income and asset copayment, client contributions, etc. based on the information entered from the SER application and determines eligibility or ineligibility for SER. Bridges electronically stores the budget; therefore, it is not

necessary to place a printed copy of the budget in the case record; see ERM 208, Budget Procedures.

Approval

Certain conditions must be met before SER can be issued to help individuals and families whose health and safety are threatened:

- Prior written or oral approval must be given by an authorized department staff person before SER issuance.
- **Do not issue SER to reimburse expenses incurred or paid without prior department approval.**
- The SER payment must resolve the emergency.
- The group must meet all applicable policy requirements for the SER service.

Case Read Form

The DHS-1271, State Emergency Relief/LIHEAP Case Read Form, should be used to document eligibility and payment accuracy.

Prior Approval

After-Hours Emergency

Immediate action may be necessary to prevent harm to SER group members when an emergency arises after hours or on weekends. The prior approval requirement may be waived in any case when the emergency occurred while department offices were closed.

The first-line manager may approve a waiver of the prior approval requirement in non-burial cases, provided an SER application is filed within five business days from the date the emergency began.

DHS-1419, Decision Notice

Inform all SER applicants in writing of the decision made on their application. Mail or give the DHS-1419, Decision Notice, to the applicant. The notice must also be provided whenever a client withdraws their application.

Proof of Payment

If the SER group meets all eligibility criteria but has an income or asset copayment, shortfall, and/or contribution, do not issue payment until the client provides proof that their payment has been made. If another agency is making the payment, proof that payment will be made is required. Verification of payment must be received in the local office within the 30-day eligibility period or no SER payment will be made and the client must reapply. Use the DHS-1419, Decision Notice, to inform the SER group of the amount they must pay and the due date for returning proof of their payment.

Energy Services

Example: For energy services, the MDHHS payment is not reduced when another agency is paying the client's current balance or arrearages, in addition to the copay, as long as the additional payment results in a zero account balance. Verify the payments and account balance with the energy provider. A client as an account balance of \$750 and a shut off notice for \$500. MDHHS energy cap is \$450 therefore the client copay is the \$50 overcap amount. A community agency is willing to pay the client copay amount and \$250 to get the bill current for a total payment of \$300. The MDHHS payment of \$450 would not be reduced.

If the agency had paid \$100 toward the need, the MDHHS would be reduced since the extra contribution was not enough to bring the total account balance to zero.

Anytime the copay is not made by another agency, the MDHHS payment is reduced.

Application Denial

If the copayment, shortfall, contribution or combination exceeds the need, the application shall be denied unless good cause is granted.

**APPLICATION
PROCESS****All Applicants**

Obtain all supporting verifications and applicant signatures. The signature(s) establishes that clients understand their rights and responsibilities and that they prepared the application(s) truthfully under penalty of perjury.

Active Applicants

The in-person interview is waived for applicants who are active for another MDHHS program or have applied online through MIBridges; however a phone interview is required and the Individual Interviewed screen must be completed for each SER.

Note: If an applicant cannot be reached by phone and no interview has been scheduled, the DHS-0170, Appointment Notice, must be sent informing the applicant of the interview requirement. A witnessed signature is not necessary for mail-in, faxed or online applications.

Inactive Applicants

In-person interviews are required for persons who are applying for SER services and are not active for another MDHHS program, unless waived by the local office director. The Individual Interview screen must be completed for each SER.

Conduct an in-person interview with an adult member of the SER group or the authorized representative. The purpose of the interview is to:

- Verify the applicant's identity.
- Determine what the emergency is and what SER service is needed.
- Inform applicants of their rights and responsibilities.
- Examine and clarify information provided on the application(s).
- Witness the applicant's signature on the application(s).
- Explain the SER eligibility requirements that must be met before approving SER payment.

SER Online Applicants

The in-person interview is waived for applicants who are active for another MDHHS program or have applied online through MIBridges; however a phone interview is required and the Individual Interviewed screen must be completed for each SER.

Standard of Promptness

Give priority to SER applicants when there is a direct threat to health or safety requiring immediate attention.

The SER standard of promptness is **10 calendar days**, beginning with the date the signed SER application is received in the local office. The case record must include documentation for any delay in processing the application beyond the standard of promptness.

- Do not use the standard of promptness as a basis for denial of SER applications.
- Continue to pend an application if the SER group is cooperating within their ability to provide verifications.
- Deny the application if the group does not cooperate.

Note: There is no standard of promptness adjustment for holidays or non-business days. The case record must include documentation for any delay in processing the application beyond the standard of promptness.

VERIFICATION

Clients must be informed of all verifications that are required and where to return verifications. The due date is **eight calendar days** beginning with the date of application. If the application is not processed on the application date, the deadline to return verification is eight calendar days from the date verification is requested. This does not change the standard of promptness date.

Use the DHS-3503, SER Verification Checklist, to request verification and to notify the client of the due date for returning the verifications.

The client must make a reasonable effort to obtain required verifications. The specialist must assist if the applicant needs and requests help. If neither the client nor the specialist can obtain the verifications despite a reasonable effort, use the best available information. If no evidence is available, the specialist must use their best judgment.

Identity

The client's identity must be verified. If an authorized representative (AR) applies on behalf of a group, the AR must verify his own **and** the client's identity.

Note: Documents used to verify identity may be originals or copies of the original document. Facsimiles are acceptable documents for identity.

The following are examples of acceptable verification of identity:

- Driver's license.
- State-issued identification.
- School-issued identification.
- Individual SSN has been validated by SSA in Bridges.
- Document indicating a client's receipt of benefits under a program which requires verification of identity (SSI, RSDI).
- Identification for health benefits.
- Voter registration card.
- Birth certificate/record.
- U.S. military card or draft record.
- U.S. passport.
- Certificate of Naturalization (Department of Homeland Security (DHS) forms N-550 or N-570).
- Certificate of U.S. citizenship (DHS forms N-560 or N-561).
- Military dependent's identification card.
- Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood, or other U.S. American Indian/Alaska native tribal document.
- U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner card.

LEGAL BASE

Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 et seq.

